

# Explanations for most sky objects

Any ideas that recent mysterious objects sighted in SA skies might be supernatural or interplanetary were scotched by the Flying Saucer Investigation Committee yesterday.

The committee, recently set up and sponsored by The News to consider mysterious phenomena, held its first meeting late yesterday.

Expert knowledge of science, aviation, and flying conditions were brought to bear on 13 cases reported during the past few weeks.

But the committee was unable to explain with complete certainty four recent cases.

Committee members elected Emeritus Prof. Sir Kerr Grant chairman.

Other members are:— Prof. L. G. H. Huxley, professor of physics at Adelaide University; Mr. R. M. Rechner, wartime pilot, CO of No. 24 (City of Adelaide) Squadron, and SA manager of TAA; Flight Lieut. R. Miller, intelligence officer, RAAF, Mallala; Mr. N. L. Petchler, Para-

field air traffic central superintendent; Mrs. J. Neale, a housewife; and Mr. Frank Shaw, The News aviation correspondent.

## Optical illusions

Committee members agreed there were simple explanations to the majority of flying saucer reports, including car headlights on nearly invisible cloud layers, birds, aircraft seen at unusual angles, fireballs, meteors, and meteorites, weather balloons, high clouds just after sunset, mirage reflections, optical illusions, and red corpuscles inside the eyes.

But there was an element of doubt about some reports. Insufficient or inaccurate information could be the reason for this.

Four of the reports dealt with yesterday fall into this category.

Cases considered were from:—  
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**Mr. D. M. Scherek, of Kirkealdy,** who reported a bright, planet-like object waxing and waning and making jerky movements on the western horizon early in the morning of January 9. Explanation—The planet Jupiter.

### Toy balloons

**Mr. W. H. Hewes, Croydon Park:** A bright, round yellow object, which hurtled across the northern sky just after midnight on January 15. Explanation—Meteorite.

**Mr. C. H. Barker, of St. Morris:** A black, dumbbell-shaped object, flying high and fast east of Adelaide at 6.15 p.m. on January 17. The committee accepted explanation by two boys who admitted they were testing two toy balloons filled with hydrogen and tied together.

A similar explanation is probable for a dumbbell-shaped object reported by **Mr. G. Knipe, of Osborne,** on the following day.

**Mr. K. J. McQuillan, of Pooraka.**—A semi-circular shaped object, flying fast from north to south at 9.20 p.m. on January 19. Bright in appearance, it left a trail of fire. Explanation. — A star or meteor.

### New type plane

**Mr. N. R. Koch, Row-**

**lands Flat,** and several others.—Wingless, cigar-shaped silver object flying 500-600 m.p.h., three miles high in a north-east direction on the afternoon of February 4. Explanation.—New type of jet aircraft, here for experimental purposes.

**Mr. C. W. Huxtable, Mallala.**—Shiny, solid object speeding across the sky and shooting up at terrific speed on the morn-

ing of January 14. Explanation.—RAAF authorities found a large toy balloon, frilled by paper and with silver strips attached as a tail, three miles from the RAAF station a few days later. A practical joke.

**Mr. D. A. Rann, Flinders Park.**—Shiny, cigar-shaped object, without wings or tail assembly, flying out to sea near Henley Beach at 1.15 p.m. on February 7. Explanation. — Aircraft climbing or banking on to course by the Visual-Aural Radio Range at West Beach used to home or depart aircraft to and from Parafield.

The doubtful cases were those submitted by Mrs. F. M. Moon, of Athelstone; and Messrs. L. Waltke, Henley Beach; R. F. Goldsmith, Edithburg; and C. R. Dallow, Ferryden Park.

### Shape distorted

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Mrs. Moon's report of an orange-colored object on the night of February 8 lacked many essential details.

Mr. Waltke's tamborine-shaped object traveling north early on January 12 was probably a distant meteorite or fireball distorted in shape by distance.

A late Convair from Melbourne with its alternating wing, nose, and tail landing lights flashing, giving the appearance of rapid horizontal and vertical flight, was offered by the committee as the possible explanation of Mr. Dallow's glowing banana-shaped object sighted late on January 14.

The report by Mr. Goidsmith of an object like a hairbrush with the bristles hanging down sighted on the evening of January 30, was most likely a flock of seabirds flying into the setting sun, stragglers below the flock forming the bristles at a distance.

The meeting ended with Sir Kerr Grant commending the forming of the committee, which he felt could achieve a worthwhile purpose in setting at rest the minds of people who might be concerned at unusual phenomena. He invited more reports for the committee's next meeting.

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