

Says He Saw "Flying Saucer" On Willis Island

CAIRNS, June 6.—Two Commonwealth radio officers on Willis Island, 400 miles east-north-east of Cairns, saw a "flying saucer" but did not report it because they were afraid of being laughed at.

The sighting was made last September. They told of the incident when they returned to Cairns yesterday afternoon aboard the lighthouse supply ship Cape Leeuwin, after 12 months on the island.

The two men are Harry Hicks, 39, who was senior radio officer in charge of the three-man weather party on the island, and Brian Darragh, 26, second radio operator.

Hicks, who has spent a total of five years on the island, said they saw the "saucer", a bright flat disc at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was pretty high and a fair distance out to sea, he said. "We watched it for three or four minutes as it moved out to sea."

Hicks said that at the time

of the object's appearance and for a short while afterwards there had been unusual interference from static on the weather station's radio receiver. He pulled down the aerial and inspected the set, thinking that the trouble might be due to a soldered joint having become corroded by the salt air. He found nothing wrong and the interference later ceased.

"I didn't report it to anybody," he said. "I didn't want to be laughed at. People probably would think I was going round the bend."

The third member of the party, Mike Bruer, 27, weather observer, said he did not see anything. "Spots before the eyes," he added.

"I looked where they were pointing, but I didn't see anything," he said. "We put the matter to a Melbourne scientist who came to the island, and he said the same thing—'spots before the eyes'."