

# A Senator's trip abroad attracts attention

**SENATOR** George McLeay, Minister for Shipping and Transport and Associate Commerce Minister, ought to take some lessons from his Cabinet colleagues in the gentle art of making a "junket" look respectable.

"Junket" is the term used by the irreverent to describe an expensive extensive and not really necessary trip undertaken by a politician at public expense.

**FEDERAL** Cabinet's most polished junketeer is undoubtedly Mr. Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration, who has visited most of the exotic play centres of the Continent in the course of organising migration.

But to return to Senator McLeay. The portly Minister last week-end left by air for London after letting it be understood that Federal Cabinet had decided he should go abroad to boost Australia's sagging trade balances.

The senator announced that he would be away until February "on business associated with shipping freights and trade promotion."

This sounded quite plausible, especially as the November trade figures, released a few days before, has shown a worsening of Australia's trade balance.

## Nigger in the wood pile

**BUT** the plausibility of the "cover story" for the

"cover story" for the McLeay junket evaporates when you consider that—

● The senator is, after all, merely Associate Commerce Minister, and definitely not one of Cabinet's shining lights.

● The able and energetic Commerce Minister, Mr. McEwen, the Customs Minister, Senator O'Sullivan, and the heads of the Commerce and Customs Departments have all been in London for months past working on the problems of trade promotion, shipping freights and associated matters—and if they cannot boost Australia's sagging trade balances, nobody can.

● Senator McLeay was planning months ago to make a private trip, at his own expense, to London to attend his daughter's wedding on January 1.

The veneer of respectability provided for the McLeay junket disappears completely with the disclosure that Prime Minister Menzies agreed most reluctantly to Senator McLeay's suggestion that he be allowed to go at

that he be allowed to go at public expense to London—the suggestion being accompanied by a blunt assertion by Senator McLeay that he was one of the few Ministers who had not had a trip abroad, and that he wanted some official excuse found to send him to London in time for his daughter's wedding.

## World trips or good jobs

**P**ROBABLY the Senator's trip is not going to cost the taxpayer nearly as much as the junkets undertaken by some other Ministers.

And Senator McLeay is probably entitled to argue that he has as much right as his colleagues to travel at public expense.

Maybe one should merely regret the crudity of the Senator's tactics.

But the fact remains — while the present Government's policy is to provide "trips for the boys," it has no right to sneer at the Labor Party's policy of "jobs for the boys."

## Flying saucers back in news

**F**LYING saucers came back into the news this week with the disclosure, during Navy Minister Francis' inspection of Nowra (N.S.W.)

naval air station, that one of the station's pilots saw what appeared to be two unidentified aircraft one night in October.

More recently the station's radar operators plotted the position of one of the pilot's unexpected travelling companions.

The story was hushed up, partly because of the Navy's traditional reticence, partly because the navy fliers did not want to be ridiculed by the sceptics.

But the pilot, a naval lieutenant from N.S.W., is sure he saw the lights of two aircraft flying alongside his Sea Fury as he returned from a night flying exercise.

And the Nowra radar operators, whom he radioed for a check, are sure that their radar screen showed an "echo" from another moving object as well as the "echo" from the Sea Fury.

The R.A.A.F. and Civil Aviation authorities had no record of any other aircraft being in the area at the time. And up to the present, the Navy has not evolved any theory to explain the observations of their pilot and their radar team.

## Impressed by Navy efficiency

**O**NLOOKER accompanied Navy Minister Francis on his Nowra visit, and was

on his Nowra visit, and was tremendously impressed by the spirit and efficiency of this second largest naval shore station in Australia.

Main task of the station is the conversion of naval pilots and maintenance men to jet aircraft, and the training of other crewmen in preparation for the taking-over next year of Australia's new aircraft carrier, H.M.A.S. Melbourne.

The Melbourne is to have Sea Venom jet fighters and Gannet turbo-prop anti-submarine aircraft instead of the Sea Fury and Firefly

with which our Fleet Air Arm is now equipped.

Mr. Francis and his party flew in the helicopters used at Nowra to train pilots for sea rescue and search operations.

## **The object "identified"**

**T**HE commander of the helicopter flight, Scottish Lieutenant Commander D. F. Farquharson, R.N., piloted the helicopter in which Mr. Francis travelled from the naval station to the nearby Nowra township to inspect a naval club.

Farquharson landed the helicopter in a paddock just off Nowra's main street — and recalled the time when he first landed a helicopter

he first landed a helicopter in a public street in England.

As he was taxi-ing the helicopter to the side of the roadway, a car drew alongside. The driver leaned out and called to Farquharson. "I say, old boy I'll strike a bargain with you.

"I won't fly my car if you'll keep your aircraft off the roads."

Incidentally, speaking of flying saucers, the R.A.A.F. station at Canberra Aerodrome has the usual aircrew briefing room with the usual models of aircraft suspended from the ceiling.

The models are used to familiarise aircrews with the silhouettes and general appearance of service aircraft, so that they become more proficient at aircraft recognition.

Among the models of Superfortresses, Vampires, Sabres at Canberra there hangs an ordinary kitchen saucer, with a red star insignia painted on its bottom

Just to make sure the Canberra aircrews know what a Russian flying saucer is like, in case one should happen along.



