

SKY OBJECT COULD HAVE BEEN VENUS

An unidentified flying object sighted north-east of Canberra yesterday morning could have been the planet Venus, Dr B. E. Westerlund, of the Mt Stromlo Observatory, said last night.

The object was seen between 10.55 am and 11.20 am by air traffic controllers at Canberra airport, the

staff of the Canberra Meteorological Bureau, an RAAF flight lieutenant and two airline pilots.

Observers said the object appeared to be stationary in the sky north-east of the control tower at the airport. It appeared to be over Mt Greenwood, but neither distance nor size could be accurately assessed.

Dr Westerlund said Venus was sometimes visible from the earth during the day, and yesterday morning it would have been to the north-east of Canberra.

Atmospheric conditions, such as fog or haze near Canberra, would make the planet look like an opaque disc.

The "shimmering" reported by the observers could have been accounted for by shifting of a bank of haze, he said.

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The manager of the Canberra airport, Mr A. B. Lindeman, said he observed

the object. It was stationary and it appeared to glitter as if reflecting the sun.

At times it was dimmer and about 11.20 it disappeared.

"I haven't a clue what it was," Mr Lindeman said. "But I hope it turns out to have been a planet or something like that."

Mr P. Todd, of the Meteorological Bureau, said he went to the control tower to look at the object after his attention had been drawn to it by a fellow-worker.

"It was a white, shining object and it seemed to be stationary to the left of Mt Greenwood," Mr Todd said.

"I watched it for about five minutes. I have not seen anything like it before and I have no idea what it might have been," Mr Todd said.

The Department of Civil Aviation has asked the RAAF to investigate.

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