

Electronic Observatory To Watch For Flying Saucers

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OTTAWA Nov. 11 (Staff) -- an engineer engaged in a scientific hunt for flying saucers says there is a 90 per cent chance the numerous saucer sightings are justified by physical somethings and better than a 50-50 chance that the somethings are alien vehicles.

He is Wilbert B. Smith, engineer in charge of the Department of Transport's broadcast and measurement section of the Telecommunications Division, which, at Shirley Bay, 10 miles west of Ottawa, had the worlds first flying saucer sighting station

The scientific watch for saucers began five years ago as a hobby among some of the telecommunications people engaged in ionospheric studies. It since has been given official recognition and there is a small appropriation for it within the Department of Transport.

The departmental directive on the subject says the station is to see what it can prove of disprove the existence of flying saucers.

The Defence Research Board, which has been gathering flying saucer data for some time, is co-operating in the project. Among those associated with it are Dr. James Wait, the board's physicist, and John H. Thompson, technical information expert of the telecommunications division.

Professor J. T. Wilson, the University of Toronto, and Dr. G.D. Garland, specialist in gravitational studies at the Dominion Observatory assisted with some of the equipment for the station.

"From our point of view," says Mr. Smith, "this is nothing more than part of our routine work. At Shirley Bay we have an ionosphere observatory in connection with our radio wave studies."

Specifically, for the flying saucer work there is additional electronic equipment, some of it unique.

The purpose of the setup according to Mr. Smith, is to gather measurements, information as to

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the type of propulsion used, and other data, if a saucer should be sighted and if it should prove to be an alien vehicle.

Those associated with the project do not subscribe to the view that the saucer sightings can be explained as optical illusions. Engineer Smith states that he has not yet found one reported sighting which wholly could be put down to illusion.

Statistically it has been worked out, on the basis of past sightings, that the object, phenomenon, or whatever, may be expected to be seen within a year or so. The people at Shirley Bay are confident that maintaining an around the clock watch, the [group] should see something in a year.

Although it did not produce the results expected, an experiment tried here some time ago proved one thing. Not many people are sky-watchers. A weather balloon, 10 feet in diameter, lighted from the underside so as to have a saucer-like appearance from the ground, was released over Ottawa. It was estimated that a minimum of 5,000 people were in a position to see it.

The saucer scientists waited for the reports to come in. For one thing, they wanted to see what sort of descriptions were given. They didn't hear a word.

In a negative way, the test seemed to support the existence of saucers if a 10-foot lighted balloon could pass unnoticed, or cause no comment, among 5,000 people, at least some of those who reported seeing flying saucers must have seen something.