

The Shirley Bay "flying saucer" Monitoring Station

The UFO Annual, Morris K. Jessup, 1956

An engineer in Canada takes UFO seriously, and recently told the Canadian Parliament some of his theories and ideas regarding the possibility of UFO's causing radio interference and other phenomena. Since his long experience has convinced him that UFOs are thoroughly real we believe his opinions worth reading. The report was in the Ottawa (Ontario) Journal, May 18, 1955 as follows:

Radio MP's Startled By Expert Witness

With a straight face, an expert witness yesterday told the Commons Radio Committee that while flying saucers were not accountable for television interference they could be blamed "for a lot of other things."

The expert witness was William (sp) B. Smith, the engineer-in-charge of the Broadcast and Measurement Section of the Telecommunications Division of the Department of Transport, and he came before the committee to explain some of the technological complications of radio and television.

But flying saucers were still close to his heart, and he still believed, as he has for some years, that there are such things.

A tall, dark and intense-eyed young man with an iron-grey brush cut, he was giving the committee the technical explanation for the interference aircraft set up in telecasting when Jean Richard, Liberal MP for East Ottawa broke in to ask: "Aren't you the Smith who operated the Transport Department's Flying Saucer sighting Station at Shirley Bay?"

"That's right."

Mr. Richard hesitated a moment, then asked if Flying Saucers accounted for some of the interference that fluttered across television screens.

"No," replied Mr. Smith evenly, "you can't blame flying saucers for TV interference, but you can for a lot of other things."

Mr. Richard neglected to follow up the intriguing possibilities this answer might have offered. The resulting silence was broken in a few seconds by Donald Fleming, Conservative MP for Toronto-Eglinton, who wanted to know why Mr. Smith had been "watching flying saucers."

The Saucer Sighting Station had been operated by Transport from August, 1953 to the late summer of 1954 "to gain knowledge."

Mr. Fleming wanted to know why it had been closed after only a year. "We were getting nowhere," reported Mr. Smith.

George D. Weaver, Liberal MP for Churchill, attempted to follow up the inquiry, but Committee Chairman Dr. Pierre Gauthier Liberal MP for Portneuf, ruled him out of order.

The Commons Radio Committee had been assigned the job of looking into CBC radio and television enterprises, he reminded, not to conduct an inquiry into the Transport Department's investigation of flying saucers.

While the committee chairman had ruled out flying saucers, Mr. Smith was quite willing to discuss them with anybody who has the interest and took the trouble to ask.

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He still "believed."

"I am convinced there are flying saucers," he said as the Committee rose for the day, "but I'm in the unhappy position of the police chief who knows who robbed the bank but can't prove it in court."

And when he had told the committee the saucer research had been "getting nowhere" he had been speaking for the Transport Department, not for himself.

Personally, he has felt further investigation was imperative since there had been one morning when the instruments at Shirley Bay station had produced what Mr. Smith termed a "wiggle." This could be explained by no known atmospheric phenomenon.

"I didn't know then what caused that strange and fascinating instrumentation," he recounted, "and I don't know now...but the possibilities are interesting."

After a year's operation he had advised the Transport Department that the research should be full and complete with all possible facilities made available, or it should be dropped altogether.

"There was the choice to go all out or get out," he said, "and the department decided that the investment in terms of personnel, laboratory facilities and equipment would not be warranted, particularly in the light of the opinion that a great many people held flying saucers in ridicule."

Still with a straight face, this telecommunications engineer, who enjoyed the confidence of former Transport Minister Chervier, confided as he left the committee hearing that while he "believed" there were flying saucers, he didn't know precisely what they were. They could be space vehicles, he said, and then again they might only be some unknown type of "celestial fireball."

The committee after shyly asking a few more shy questions of Mr. Smith returned to the more

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familiar subjects of television and radio operating licences and the procurements of these highly prized assets.

But before they had finished with him, the committee got back to the question of aircraft and TV interference.

The interference, explained Mr. Smith, was first set up by the TV transmission itself. Some TV waves rippling out from the transmitter strike passing aircraft and are bounced back to the transmitter and so out on the television signal to the viewer's screens.