

## VFW Chief Awaiting Message From Capital on Flying Discs

tempted explanations throughout the country yesterday.

A Los Angeles newspaper quoted an unidentified scientist in nuclear physics at the California Institute of Technology as saying the flying discs have resulted from experiments in "transmutation of atomic energy" being conducted at Muroc Lake, Calif., White Sands, N. Mex.; Portland, Oreg., and elsewhere.

The scientist, whom the newspaper said had worked as a researcher on the atomic bomb "Manhattan Project," was quoted as saying:

"People are not seeing things. Such flying discs actually are in experimental existence.

"These saucers so-called are capable of high speeds but they can be controlled from the ground.

"They are 20 feet in width at the center and are partially rocket-propelled on the takeoff."

However, other scientists were skeptical about the claims of the unnamed California physicist. Dr. Harold Urey, famed atomic scientist at the University of Chicago, said the term "transmutation of atomic energy" is "gibberish."

"You can transmute metals, but not energy," and Dr. Urey.

David Lilienthal, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, declared the unexplained discs are in no way connected with atomic experiments. Lilienthal said he couldn't shed any light on the mystery and added:

"Until someone has the facts about this phenomenon, 'I can't see how anyone can say anything definite about it.'"

And Dr. C. C. Lauritsen, head of the nuclear physics department at California Institute of Technology, said he was certain nobody in his department, which includes four former Manhattan Project researchers including himself, had made "such a statement."

He expressed the opinion that the discs "have nothing to do with nuclear physics."

Strangely enough, the Murco, Calif., Army Air Base, identified as one of the sites where the "secret experiments" are being carried out, announced that it had a P-80 fighter plane standing by to give chase if one of the flying saucers made an appearance.

Col. Al Dutton, commanding officer of the Oregon National

Guard, announced that the guard's squadron would attempt to photograph any future apparitions of the discs. He said six P-51 fighter planes, equipped with gun and telescopic cameras, would be kept ready to take off on a moment's notice.

Col. F. J. Clark, commanding officer of the Hanford Engineering Works in the Pacific Northwest where the largest saucer influx has been reported, said the saucers were not coming from the atomic plant there.

"I have been waiting for someone to tie the discs to the Hanford atomic plant," he said. He declared that as far as he knew no experiments were under way there which would explain the mystery.

Two Chicago astronomers said the discs are probably "man-made."

"They couldn't be meteors," said Dr. Girard Kuiper, director of the University of Chicago's Yerkes Observatory at Williams Bay, Wis.

Dr. Oliver Kee, director of Northwestern University's Dearborn Observatory, said:

"We realize that the Army and Navy are working on all sorts of things we know nothing about."

He said the mystery disks may represent an accomplishment similar to that of sending radar signals to the moon, "one of the greatest technological achievements of the war and accomplished in absolute secrecy."

Here in Washington, Dr. Newbern Smith of the National Bureau of Standards expressed the opinion that all the excitement is akin to "those Loch Ness Monster stories."

The only comment offered by

Capt. E. Duvall, assistant superintendent of the Naval Observatory, said that the saucer "does not seem to be an astronomical phenomenon."

Credence in the saucers—widely laughed off at their first reported appearance June 25—grew as hundreds of observers, some of them trained fliers, reported seeing them.

A crowd of 200 observed a disc at Hauser Lake, Idaho, Friday and a group of 60 picnickers saw them at Twin Falls, Idaho. And in Portland, Oreg., so many residents witnessed them that same day the police department sent out an all-cars broadcast.

The crew of a United Airlines plane said several of the round, flat objects were visible for about 12 minutes.

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