

work on the project was restricted to the small group of scientists and engineers within the Broadcast and Measurements Section (Telecommunications Division), headed by Wilbert B. Smith. Assistance from other agencies such as the National Research Council and the Defence Research Board was obtainable only on an informal basis.

Despite these limitations, project investigators managed to conduct a most comprehensive study of the phenomenon. Contrary to precedent, UFO sighting reports were systematically investigated, "weighed," and catalogued. And more fundamentally, the subject of UFOs in general came to be treated seriously by the project team.

The "Project Magnet" conclusions (which independently confirmed the earlier findings of the U.S. Air Force project) are noteworthy. In 1953, project chief Smith wrote:

"It appears then, that we are faced with a substantial probability of the real existence of extra-terrestrial vehicles, regardless of whether or not they fit into our scheme of things. Such vehicles of necessity must use a technology considerably in advance of what we have. It is therefore submitted that the next step in this investigation should be a substantial effort towards the acquisition of as much as possible of this technology, which would without doubt be of great value to us."

As one might expect, by this time a rather serious rift had developed between officialdom and the small group of scientists and engineers most closely associated with the UFO question. "Project Magnet" investigators had clearly committed the bureaucratic cardinal sin of "making waves." Accordingly, their findings were quietly laid to rest.

In April, 1952, following the disclosure that UFOs had been sighted racing over the RCAF jet base at North Bay, Ont., newspapers from coast to coast reported that a drastic, positive change had occurred in Ottawa's attitude toward the phenomenon. As proof, various high-ranking government officials were quoted.

The following statements are representative:

Dr. Peter Millman, Dominion Observatory astro-physicist: "We can't laugh off these observations."

Dr. C. J. Mackenzie, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Control Board:

"These reports cannot be ignored as nonsense."

Dr. O. M. Solandt, Chairman of the Defence Research Board: "We are as mystified as anyone else... We are keeping our minds open and studying information that becomes available."

Despite such pronouncements, Ottawa's attitude toward the subject of UFOs remained apathetic. On April 24, 1952, the initial meeting of an inter-departmental committee (designated "Project Second Storey") was secretly convened under the auspices of the Defence Research Board. Although created for the purpose of looking into the matter of UFOs, the committee's scope of enquiry, reflective of its military sponsorship, was strictly limited to the question of whether or not UFOs constituted a threat to the national security. Having concluded negatively on the existence of such a threat the following year, the committee was promptly dissolved. During its tenure, the committee failed to investigate any UFO cases, as it was neither directed nor funded to do so. (Despite these facts, the "Project Second Storey" findings were widely touted by officialdom today as having proved the non-existence of UFOs.)

In December, 1954, a confidential letter, signed on behalf of the chairman of the Defence Research Board, was sent to the Air, Military, and Naval Attache at the Italian Embassy (Ottawa). In accordance with Italy's request for information regarding Canada's official policy towards UFOs, our government replied that "while sighting reports are still collected when submitted by the general public, no further attempt has been made to analyze the data submitted."

Further, in a classified Department of National Defence memorandum of December, 1957 (the contents of which were later forwarded by the Department of External Affairs to the High Commissioner's Office in London), it was candidly noted that "the RCAF has no official policy concerning the subject (of UFOs). There is no office within the National Defence Headquarters commissioned to deal with the reports of these phenomena... There has never been a serious investigation of any report on file at AFHQ."

(These and other Department of National Defence documents have (until now) successfully remained buried for

over 15 years at the Public Archives Record Centre in Ottawa. Although the documents are currently unclassified, their release to the general public is severely restricted.)

Officialdom's disinterest in the UFO phenomenon was most certainly not owing to a lack of anything to investigate:

At sunset on June 30, 1954, a BOAC Boeing Strato Cruiser was flying over southern Labrador enroute from New York to London. The airliner was cruising at 19,000 feet with a true airspeed of 230 knots. Visibility was excellent. At the controls was Captain James Howard.

Suddenly, Captain Howard and his co-pilot became aware of an enormous, dark "jelly-fish-like" object, accompanied by six smaller objects, pacing the airliner below and off its port beam. The pilot quickly radioed Goose Bay for assistance. Within minutes, a fighter was airborne and being vectored toward the scene. The unknown objects were still clearly visible from the airliner when the fighter pilot radioed ahead to report he was some 20 miles away and closing rapidly. With that, the small objects quickly entered their larger companion, after which the entire host immediately vanished. The unknown objects were in view of the BOAC crew for nearly 25 minutes.

In the fall of 1953, Wilbert Smith assembled a vast assortment of electronic measuring devices in a government building near Shirley Bay, Ont. His purpose: to test the theory that UFOs, if they indeed be interplanetary craft, might exhibit unique electromagnetic and gravitational properties. If a UFO were to appear nearby, Smith reasoned, its presence would hopefully activate the instruments.

Smith was not disappointed. At 3:01 p.m. on August 8, 1954, alarm bells, connected to the lab's gravimeter, sounded loudly throughout the building. Smith excitedly told reporters: "I dashed over to look at the instrument. The deflection in the line (drawn by an electronically operated pen) was greater and more pronounced than we have ever seen even when a large aircraft has passed overhead. I ran outside to see what might be in the sky. The overcast was down to 1,000 feet, so whatever was up there, whatever it was that caused the sharp variation, was concealed behind clouds. We must