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JAPAN HAS A LOOK AT HOWLAND!

Sidelights on the Search For Amelia Earhart

From Our Own Correspondent

HONOLULU, July 14.

JAPAN pulled an interesting bit of Yankee bluff during the search for the missing American aviators, Mrs. Earhart Putnam and Mr. Fred. Noonan, in the vicinity of the Phoenix and Gilbert Islands.

For long Japan has been intrigued by the American activities on Jarvis, Baker and Howland, the newly colonised equatorial islands, and by British activities south-east of Japan's mandated islands.

Instantly the American aviators were missing, the Japanese Government through Washington offered every facility for the search. Japan wasted no time. The U.S. navy soon reported that a Japanese aircraft carrier, convoyed by a navy survey ship and several warships, was steaming towards Howland, which the U.S. army and navy have converted into a modern airport, suitable for the longest ranged military aircraft.

Polltely Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Saito in Washington informed U.S. Secretary for State Cordell Hull that the Japanese war vessels simply wanted to be of service!

So, by using Japanese Marshall Islands as operating bases, the Japanese have inspected the Gilbert, Ellice and Phoenix Groups, and gone further eastward to

Howland and Baker, and, it is possible, northward towards the Hawaiian Islands to Johnston (midway between Hawaii and Howland) where America is creating a new and permanent patrol airboat operating base.

The Japanese have tackled the search with the same enthusiasm as the American navy and coastguard ships have inspected the three groups which are British owned. The American press has not mentioned that, of course. And, off the record in private to reporters, U.S. navy officials boast that the long range planes from the aircraft carrier *Lexington* will take more than a peep at the Marshall Islands (Japanese Mandate)!

IT is most likely that the U.S. Government will not permit any more long distance flights to be undertaken by American aviators. The Government stopped the proposed New York-Paris air race, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of Lindbergh's solo flight, from starting from American soil, and Mrs. Putnam's ill-fated flight was okayed only because she was a close friend of the President's wife. The newspapers did not hesitate to ask of what use was the flight, what did it contribute to the science of aviation that already was not known?

Before the Putnam-Noonan party had left Lae, New Guinea, to fly to Howland Island, the U.S. Government had taken all the precautions against disaster that it could by placing navy and coastguard ships in the vicinity and giving the aviators the benefit of specially compiled weather reports. The globe-girdling plane, however, apparently was poorly equipped with radio. As a matter of fact, the American experts who prepared the plane and the Government officials who okayed it, could not state definitely how it was equipped with radio. So much could have been removed since it left Florida.

NOT once during the flight from Lae until the plane was forced down out of gasoline, did the party give their position. Not once. They said at one time that they were 700 odd miles from Lae, but that vague message wasn't very useful. The last message said they thought they were 100 miles from Howland, out of sight of land, that a landing was to

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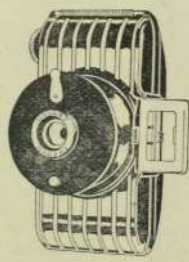
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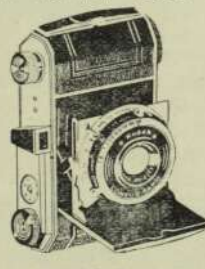
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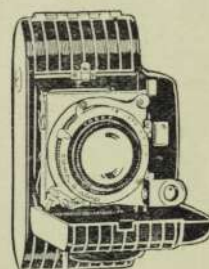
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be made on water. This was given over the radio-telephone.

Every American station forthwith listened for further messages or signals, but the first reported as apparently coming from the lost plane was one picked up by *H.M.S. Achilles*, flagship of the N.Z. Division of the Royal Navy, which was near the equator en route to Hawaii. Other stations reported receiving the same or a similar message.

The following week proved a tremendous strain for everybody involved in the search and this included dozens of amateur radio operators, who remained at their seats almost without sleep. The strain was climaxed when Mr. George Palmer Putnam, husband of the missing aviatrix, requested the U.S. navy to fly

him from Hawaii down to Howland Is. so that there he might set up a broadcast series and play up the search commercially on American national networks.

In very plain language, Rear Admiral Orin G. Murfin, in charge of the search, turned down the extraordinary request.

Bitter criticism of the navy's hunt for the aviators with costly battleships and aircraft carriers rang out in the U.S. Congress. Representative Charles I. Faddis, of Pennsylvania, said what was in millions of people's minds:

"Do you suppose the navy would spend 250,000 dollars a day to hunt for some poor fisherman, perhaps the father of a family, if he were lost in the Pacific?"

Added Representative Byron N. Scott, of California: "It is time someone in

authority announced that henceforth the navy would not be used to search for 'publicity stunt' aviators."

Wild excitement was caused among the few white men and hundreds of native guano workers in the Phoenix Group when seaplanes from the U.S.S. *Colorado* combed the islands for possible traces of the missing plane.

Millions of sea birds caused the planes to hesitate from flying too low. However, one of the seaplanes made a landing, the first plane ever to do so, on the lagoon of Hull Island.

The plane was greeted by the white manager who said that the missing plane had not been heard on the island's radio set.

American Yacht "Chiva" Reaches Suva

From Our Own Correspondent

SUVA, Aug. 3.

IN the course of a scientific cruise collecting flora and fauna for the Academy of Natural Science, of Philadelphia, U.S.A., the American yacht *Chiva*, a diesel auxiliary vessel of 20 tons, arrived in Suva recently.

She left New York last December, and cruised to Fiji via Panama Canal, Galapagos Islands, Marquesas, Tuamotus, Tahiti, and Pago Pago. From Suva the *Chiva* will go on to Santa Cruz Group, Solomon Islands, and New Guinea, where the party plans to spend about a year.

Mr. F. E. Crockett (photographer) is the leader of the expedition, and his wife, an anthropologist, is collecting data for Harvard University. Other members of the party are Mrs. Lowndes (writer), Mr. Ripley (zoologist), Captain G. F. Adams (sailing master), Mr. C. W. Smith (engineer) and Capt. John Nash.

So far the expedition has not collected many specimens, but intends to concentrate chiefly on the coasts of New Guinea.

COOK ISLANDS FRUIT

From Our Own Correspondent

RAROTONGA, July 21.

ALTHOUGH exact figures are not available yet regarding the profit and loss account on "controlled" orange shipments from the Cook Islands, enquiries among officials point to these being satisfactory, with the exception of the first consignment by the *Limerick* in May. The latter shipment reached N.Z. in poor condition, but a new method of dunnage on trans-Pacific steamers is expected to obviate this in future.

Extensive renovation work has been begun on plantations.

The new Resident Commissioner (Mr. S. J. Smith) in a number of "talks" to growers, appealed to all to join together in the co-operative spirit which was once so marked a feature of Polynesian life. As a result of Mr. Smith's obvious personal interest in their welfare, the natives have responded by undertaking pruning and other operations on the community system.



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