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STINSON CRASH

Committee's Report Disaster Near Archerfield

-SYDNEY, Friday:— The report of the Air Accidents Investigation Committee on the crash of the Stinson aeroplane near Archerfield aerodrome on March 28, which was released by the Acting Minister for Defence (Mr. Thorby) to-day, said it was possible that some physical or other defect had occurred to the pilot, Thomas Stewart Cameron, but the actual cause of the accident could never be proved. The Committee expressed the opinion that lack of visibility due to darkness and fog, was an important contributory factor to the accident.

The Committee made certain recommendations to the Government with a view to securing a greater degree of safety in similar weather conditions. These recommendations were not disclosed by Mr. Thorby, who said they had been sent to the Civil Aviation Board for consideration and would be referred to the aviation conference between Commonwealth and State Governments next week. NOT OVERLOADED The report said the plane was not overloaded, but was practically fully loaded. There was a thick ground fog on the aerodrome, but the pilot had ascertained by telephone that the weather at Maryborough and Rockhampton was good. The approximate track of the aircraft was ascertained from branches broken off trees, and it was clear that the aircraft immediately after clearing the boundary of the

aerodrome had commenced a comparatively steep turn to the right. After striking the tops of trees while

turning, the aeroplane continued on a course reciprocal to its take-off and eventually struck a large tree, which broke off one wing and brought the aircraft to the ground. The complete destruction of the aircraft by fire precluded any possibility of finding any material cause of the accident, such as mechanical or instrument failure. "It is not believed that any structural, control or instrument failure occurred," the report states, "as the wheel marks on the aerodrome showed that the take-off was perfectly straight and it is logical to assume that had any mechanical or other defect occurred the pilot would have shut off his engines before finally striking the ground. TO THE RIGHT INVOLUNTARY "The regulations require that all turns made in the vicinity of an aerodrome should be to the left. The position of the pilot on the left hand side in this type of aircraft makes a left hand turn more natural than one to the right, and also in a turn to the left it is possible to see the ground beneath, whereas in a turn to the right it is impossible to see the ground. It may, therefore, be assumed that the turn to the right was involuntary. "The only reasons which can be advanced for this inexplicable action are: (1) Failure of the starboard engine; (2) instrument failure due to a defective vacuum pump; (3) physical defect or reaction on the part of the pilot. Persons at the aerodrome did not hear any alteration in the engine noises which would indicate a failure of one or more of the engines. The fact that the aircraft took off on a perfectly straight course also indicates that the instruments were functioning satisfactorily during the take-off, and their subsequent failure soon after taking off would not reduce the gyro speed to such an extent as to make an instrument failure the cause of such a sudden and marked turn to the right."