

RAAF TO MAKE RAIN IN VICTORIA SOON

Special fluid will replace dry ice in new tests

IMPORTANT rain-making tests will be made in Victoria soon. A RAAF Dakota, at present being fitted out, will play a leading part in the tests, using a special fluid instead of the dry ice which was used in previous tests.

RAAF headquarters said yesterday that a Dakota was being fitted with a number of tanks capable of holding 700 gallons of the special fluid.

Rain is expected to develop when the fluid is sprayed on to clouds.

When the Dakota has passed tests it will commence flying duties in collaboration with the CSIR. It will be in charge of Communications Flight at Laverton.

Sprays about 8ft long are being fitted underneath the aircraft to eject the fluid. The tests will be made by Flight-Lieut H. Slape, a Victorian member of the Air Force.

Flight-Lieut Slape recently played an important part in aerial spraying of hordes of grasshoppers that invaded cereal crops in the State. He brought the "invasion" to a halt with a number of Beaufighters using wing tanks. They covered more than 30,000 acres of crops and grasslands.

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RAIN COULD BEAT THE RAIN-MAKERS

Will general rain reach the dry areas of northern Victoria before the CSIRO rainmaking team can get into action?, weather men are asking today.

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General rain is advancing towards Victoria from the west and is expected to reach the dry areas of the Mallee and Wimmera on Tuesday or Wednesday.

And weather prospects for the Queen's Birthday holiday on Monday are doubtful.

The Weather Bureau said today that good periods of sunshine and mild temperatures were likely tomorrow, but unsettled conditions would return on Sunday or Monday.

However it is not likely the twin-engined RAAF Dakota to be used in the rainmaking attempts will be ready at Nhill before Wednesday or Thursday.

WET IN WEST

The deputy-director of the Melbourne Weather Bureau, Mr J. Lilywhite, said today that general rain was falling in central Australia and the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

But it was too early to say whether this rain would be heavy or light when it reached northern Victoria about Tuesday or Wednesday.

Some rain fell in the Wimmera yesterday, he said, but the heaviest fall was only three-quarters of an inch. None fell in the Mallee.

"Even if it does rain the CSIRO will probably go ahead with their attempt," Mr Lilywhite said. "The Mallee and Wimmera are so dry they can do with several inches."