

Work Goes On For Atom Tests

From Our Special Representative

ONSLOW (WA), April 25.

Preparations for the British atom tests—believed to be scheduled for the Monte Bello Islands in September or October—are going on quietly at this remote little port in the far north of WA.

For some months airmen, presumably belonging to an airfield construction squadron, have been flying in. They have been ferried across to the Monte Bello group, about 85 miles to the north-east, by the Naval corvette Mildura and the boom ship Karangi.

Yesterday a big Army truck, laden with stores and equipment, arrived in the town. A camp is being built in front of the hospital to accommodate 150 Army personnel, due shortly.

Speculation in the town is that the Army men are here in connection with tests from the Woomera rocket range. This leads to the belief that guided missiles or pilotless aircraft will be sent off from the range soon.

The fact that the atomic tests are to be held at the Monte Bellos has been the best kept secret in the north-west for many years.

But this atom town of about 300 is not particularly perturbed about the prospect of an atomic test being held off the coast. All that seems to interest its residents is that they are seeing a lot of new faces.

Bulldozers driven by airmen are hard at work on the islands. Omslow residents believe that they are constructing an airstrip capable of handling heavy atom bombers.

Arrangements for Britain's atomic tests began at Omslow about 18 months ago. A security man arrived to look over the airfield and left again quietly. His visit was followed by the arrival of HMAS Karangi, towing a landing barge.

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it was taken into the creek and two bulldozers and trucks were loaded aboard.

The Karangi then took aboard a party of airmen and left for the islands.

Airmen, warned not to mention their secret mission, have been flying into the town, and within two hours have been on board the Karangi or Mildura bound for the Monte Bellos.

The building of an airstrip on the islands gives rise to the belief that the Monte Bellos may be the main base for all atomic work and that any explosions will take place at sea.

Another theory is that the islands will be the launching spot for guided missiles which will be launched into the Woomera rocket range area.

Watching towers are already installed at Woomera and the scientists based there could easily watch any explosions.

