

The Tasman Flight--2YA's Outstanding Broadcasts

Stirring Scene at Trentham

AN EVENING FOR EVER UNFORGETTABLE

AN ANXIOUS EVENING.

(Continued from Front Page.)

There is no need for us to recapitulate the details of that anxious evening, for unquestionably it became very anxious, not only to those on the ground, but to all in their homes who had the imagination to picture the drama played out between the men concerned and the fast falling shades of evening—unless indeed, as some think, there had come a sudden end at sea beyond sight of New Zealand. All that could be done from Trentham was done. Poignancy was given to the occasion by the description of a tense group of the loved ones of the flyers keenly awaiting their arrival. Admiration and a thrill of human sympathy was evoked for Mrs. Moncrieff and her companion, Mrs. Hood, when at midnight the former rose to the occasion of saying a few words through the micro-

phone to the listening public. With a steady voice, and the fullest confidence of their success in the light of the reports of their having been seen, she breathed her conviction as to her husband's capacity to make a successful landing in completion of his historic flight. At the same time she conveyed her thanks to the public, both there and throughout New Zealand, for the interest and sympathy they were taking in the enterprise.

From this point, as more reports, apparently confirmed from separate angles, came to hand of the aviators' search for Trentham, interest became at once more engrossing and more anxious, as listeners realised the increasingly difficult problem presented by the passage of the hours and the exhaustion of the petrol.

Then came mention of preparations for the sending up of rockets and incidents in connection therewith. At two o'clock the crowd had dwindled considerably, and at 2.30 the authorities recognised that it was useless hanging on any further, and 2YA reluctantly closed down.

TRIBUTE TO OFFICIALS.

A tribute should be paid to all the Government officials concerned—officers of the Post and Telegraph Department and of the Defence Department, as well as of the Broadcasting Company for the steady efforts made throughout a long evening to give the public the information it sought. Practically all were on duty continuously without a meal or relief from 4 o'clock in the afternoon, or earlier, to 4 o'clock in the morning, by which time many were only reaching their homes from Trentham.

Although the evening's broadcast was unfortunately not crowned by news of the successful arrival of the plane, the evening was a very striking demonstration of the service that broadcasting is capable of rendering to the public. Unquestionably hundreds of thousands listened, at any rate in the earlier part of the evening, to the radio waves from Trentham, and thus felt that they were as closely in touch with the event as if they were on the ground itself. Broadcasting thus takes rank in the public mind of the Dominion as an organ of immeasurable utility.

appearances "well away" the triumphant conclusion of their adventurous enterprise seemed to be taken for granted, and there were few, if any, who did not confidently believe that the plane would come sweeping gracefully to the landing ground at Trentham somewhere between 7 and 8 o'clock that evening. And what an evening for the consummation of such an enterprise! The sun, supreme in the heavens, glossing the azure blue of the almost cloudless sky, and scarce even the semblance of the gentlest zephyrs to stir the stillness of a perfect summer's eve. Surely Nature and all the Elements had in friendly conspiracy united to provide an ideal setting for the grand finale, and to reward the gallant avia-

spirit of hopeful expectancy. It needed but the thrill of the longed-for appearance of a moving speck 'twixt sky and distant hill tops, just the first faint throbbing of the engine of the fast approaching plane, to have sent the great crowd wild with enthusiastic excitement and to have started a cheer such as would have literally rent the heavens.

But time sped on. Seven o'clock came, seven-thirty, eight, the sun disappeared, and as it went the clouds, radiant in a glory of brilliant tints, gradually became dull and drab. The while, countless necks were craned in vigilant search of the aerial voyagers. Doubtful conjecture began to clip the wings of hopeful optimism. Just as the

tors with all the essential conditions for a perfect landing. And so, by train and bus and car the crowds trooped hopefully to the appointed rendezvous, filling to capacity the seating accommodation of the main grandstand, thronging the lawns and overflowing a wide area of the surrounding grounds. Well before 7 o'clock the stage was set for what would indeed have proved a great reception.

From where the microphone was then placed—on the course proper in front of the stand—the scene, having regard to its occasion, was one to which only a poet could do justice. The very atmosphere seemed to pulsate with the

warmth of the summer's eve gave place to the chill of night, so fell the mental temperature of the watchers.

Then came the moon, and with its coming, its silvery beauty soon to be masked by the massing clouds, and with its coming the entire scene was changed. Only from the vantage point of the members' stand was it possible to drink in the full significance of this new scene. Picture it, if you can. In the centre of the course the parked cars of the official party, now much thinner in personnel than it was; figures moving about silently in the semi-darkness, and flitting now and then into the glare of the one big bonfire or the

kin. Men and women were united by a common anxiety, and a common sympathy for the three watchers who personified in themselves the concentrated anxiety of the multitude—the mother of Lieut. Moncrieff and the wives of the two airmen who with courageous and confident optimism "stood by" from early evening until the very last.

IN CHRISTCHURCH.

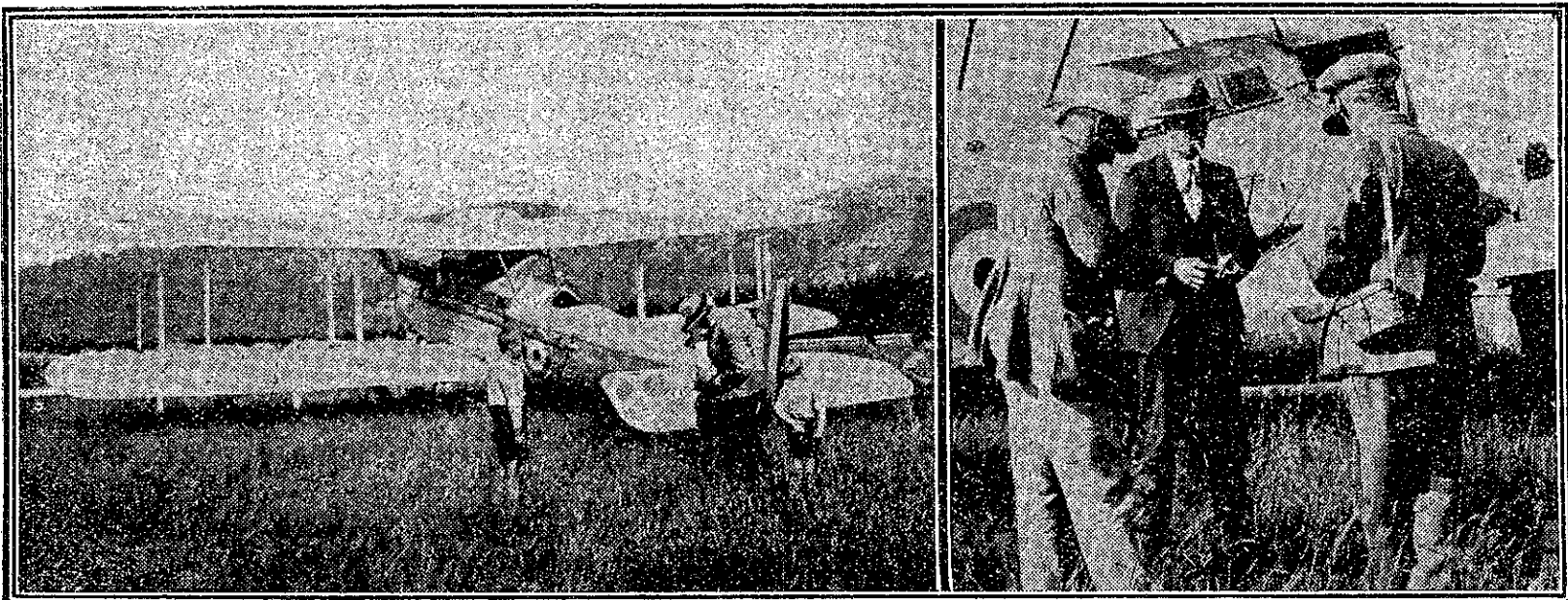
REBROADCAST MUCH APPRECIATED.

Crystal set users at Christchurch on Tuesday evening had all the thrills and excitement of the people at Trentham. The descriptions of the scene there were so graphic that listeners experienced all the expectancy of those who were looking over the Trentham hilltops for the first sign of the aeroplane. The occasion of the re-broadcast of 2YA was historic, and excitement was tense. The listeners-in heard all the news there was, and in that way fared better than did the people at Trentham, who were the victims of all manner of wild rumours.

Though the silent day at 3YA, this station went on the air on Tuesday, and helped to establish in the minds of the public the value of broadcasting as a public utility. The broadcasting stations have "put over stunts" before, but these have generally been in the way of entertainment. On Tuesday, however, the stations served another purpose, that of purveyors of news to many thousands of anxious people.

It was an interesting sight at 3YA during the evening, and until the close down at 2.30. Apart from the station staff, other men who were greatly interested in the flight were there. The place resembled a newspaper office during war time, when local strategists were wont to gather to await the cable news, and then to work out on a map what the opposing armies had done, and would, or ought to, do. So it was with the flight across the Tasman. As each report came through from 2YA, there was much speculation as to the position of the lost airmen, and conjectures were made as to the probable course to be pursued by them. Their chances of landing before their benzine supply was exhausted were keenly debated.

Widespread appreciation of the enterprise of the Broadcasting Company in this matter has been expressed.



Photograph shows the aeroplane which arrived at Trentham from Christchurch in charge of Capt. Findlay to assist in the search for the missing airmen. Right:—The airmen discussing the prospects.

