

Historic Trans-Tasman Flight

(Continued from cover.)

LISTENERS-IN heard each machine start up with a roar and take off and the picturesque scene at Sockburn was graphically and interestingly described. A mighty roar announced that the Gloster Grebe was taking to the air and this exceptionally fast machine under Captain Findlay entertained the waiting crowd with a session of sensational stunting.

The mist over the plain was quickly dispersing and at last out of the haze in the northern distance came five aeroplanes, one very much larger than the rest. They were described from the roof of 3YA by the aid of binoculars, but for some time later it was impossible for the naked eye to detect them, and then at first only the giant "Southern Cross." The aeroplanes did not fly over the city but headed straight for Sockburn.

The "Southern Cross" circled the aerodrome and the roar of her engines was distinctly heard by all listeners. The great plane with its blue body and silver wings was flying only a hundred to two hundred feet above the heads of the crowd. Then said the announcer:

"She is landing now—she is forty feet off the ground—the wheels have touched—she has jumped a few feet into the air and down again—a perfect landing only a few feet from the marked landing circle—the time is 9.23."

SPEECHES BROADCAST.

THE "Southern Cross" had landed!

People from one end of New Zealand to the other knew it—at 9.23 too. But radio had not finished its part in the great flight. The speeches were to follow. Mr. McWilliams spoke from the aerodrome and Squadron-Leader Kingsford Smith and Flight Lieutenant Ulm spoke from the studio of 3YA. Next day followed the civic welcome and that evening listeners were enabled to overhear all—or most—that was said at a Returned Soldiers' smoke concert tendered to the airmen.

The Broadcasting Company's stations handled the flight with splendid efficiency, but the company does not claim all the credit to itself. This was borne out in an interview which Mr. A. R. Harris, General Manager of the Company, had with a Christchurch "Star" reporter on the day of the flight. In the course of that interview Mr. Harris said that the company and listeners were deeply indebted to the Post and Telegraph Department for its whole-hearted co-operation. The Department had spared no trouble to keep the radio stations posted with the latest reports and it had installed a first-class land line to the aerodrome, a distance of seven miles. Mr. Harris also referred to the great assistance that he had received from Mr. P. R. Climie (Secretary of the Canterbury Progress League), Major T. M. Wilkes (Director of the Air Services), and Captain J. L. Findlay (officer commanding the aerodrome).

The giant monoplane "SOUTHERN CROSS," that carried the famous flyer and his crew safely across the Pacific.

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Capt. Kingsford Smith

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