

Two Epics of Radio and Aerial Navigation

THE success of the Southern Cross and the achievement of her radio in keeping in contact with the distant shores recalls the tragic epics of the past.

The radio equipment carried on the recent flight was a duplicate of that used on the ill-fated Dallas Spirit, with whose equipment radio history was subsequently made.

ABOUT twelve months ago, four 'planes set out from America, in a race to Honolulu. Nine had entered but four only had taken off successfully. Two only reached the goal. Of these four 'planes the winner only carried radio equipment.

Subsequent to the mysterious disappearance of the two planes, the Dallas Spirit, one of the five that had failed to get away, took off on a flight to Honolulu over a zig-zag course, searching for the lost flyers. As this involved a greater distance than laid out for the contest flights, a maximum load of gasoline was taken aboard, and a course laid out which would take them over as much as possible of the region where the lost flyers might be found. The 33-metre transmitter was removed from one of the damaged 'planes and installed in the Dallas Spirit. Both the aviators were expert operators, and thoroughly familiar with radio telegraphy.

The circuit (identical, of course, with that of the Southern Cross) is the well-known tuned-grid-plate circuit, and one frequently used in various types of transmitters.

The transmitter was of the fixed tuning type adjusted to 33.1 metres, and the grid tuning condenser adjusted permanently.

THE 'plane left Oakland air port at 2 p.m., and its signals were immediately picked up. Reporters took down the log as fast as it was received.

The keys were kept closed on the 'plane when no messages were to be transmitted, so that the listeners heard a continuous 240-cycle note—this was the hum of the transmitter's generator. This note did not vary in intensity or wavelength during the entire flight, except when the tail spins ended the flight in tragedy. As evening came and the 'plane reached a distance of 500 miles from the shore, the signals continued to remain constantly strong at all times. Reports of their reception came in from Italy, the South Atlantic, and from all districts of the U.S.A.

In New York, the entire transmission was picked up by the "New York Times" station, so that the news was released to the Press as fast as it was transmitted from the 'plane. A complete log covering six hours ended with a climax which is seared across the memory of those who listened.

WHEN the tail spins came the whine of the generator rose to above 500 cycles, indicating that the 'plane was going at a rate of over 200 miles an hour. Throughout both tail spins the generator functioned perfectly, the voltage regulators preventing the valve from being overloaded, and the transmitter wave remained steady.

The fact that the operator (Eichwaldt) remained at the key sending out dots and dashes of his last message while the 'plane was hurling downward at a sickening speed is an everlasting

tribute to his courage and presence of mind, even in the face of certain death. Those who listened on shore will never forget the howling and screeching of the note when the 'plane went into the tail spins and KGCA was no more, after a life of six and a half hours.

The Aotea-roa.

AT this time when the triumphs of the Southern Cross is on everyone's lips, our thoughts wing back to that valiant January endeavour, when the evening skies were scanned for the airmen who never came.

Exactly eight months before the victorious Southern Cross achieved its great victory and blazed a fresh trail the first air drama of the Tasman was staged.

BEFORE dawn on January 10, the Ryan monoplane skimmed lightly from the Richmond aerodrome, and, like a bird, rose and without hesitation set out on her long journey.

The first flickers of the rising sun greeted the 'plane flying strongly for her objective. The day without a morrow had broken on the intrepid airmen.

THE Aotea-roa was equipped with a radio equipment not to be compared with that of her successor. The circuit was simple, and was set to emit only automatic signals every quarter of an hour. This signal was a whine as that caused by a howling valve.

As the 'plane headed for the homeland of her pilots, the signals grew fainter, until at 11.20 a.m., when about 500 miles from the Australian coast, the signals faded out and listeners in both countries waited on the tip-toe of expectation.

But as time went and neither reliable signal nor sign came, apprehension spread. Far into the night hope ran high, but as the dawn approached, and no sign, fears were entertained and became alarming as time dragged on—then the grim truth was realised. Either the Tasman, or the unexplored bush country, had claimed its ransom.

NOW two wreaths float out on that watery waste, grimly reminiscent of two gallant New Zealanders who sacrificed all to bring honour to their country.

Effect in England. 4YA and the Flight.

Radio Altering Lives of People. Radio Society's Tribute.

"WIRELESS is altering the lives of the people of England to an enormous extent," said the Rev. E. C. Crosse, M.A., headmaster of Christ's College, who returned from a trip to England recently.

"On the wireless," continued Mr. Crosse, "you can listen to everybody, the Prime Minister, the Prince of Wales, and operatic prima donnas. It is adding tremendous interest to the people's lives."

There was, he continued, a wireless programme of some sort nearly all the day. One could listen-in to either London or Daventry, which always provided good programmes, or to any number of smaller stations, of which more were coming into being every day. It was a great boon to hospital patients and other people who were unable to go out.

"I heard the Grand National described in great detail by a man who knew every horse," said Mr. Crosse, "and it was almost as exciting as seeing the race."

There was a movement, said Mr. Crosse, to get the speeches in Parliament broadcast, but it was rather

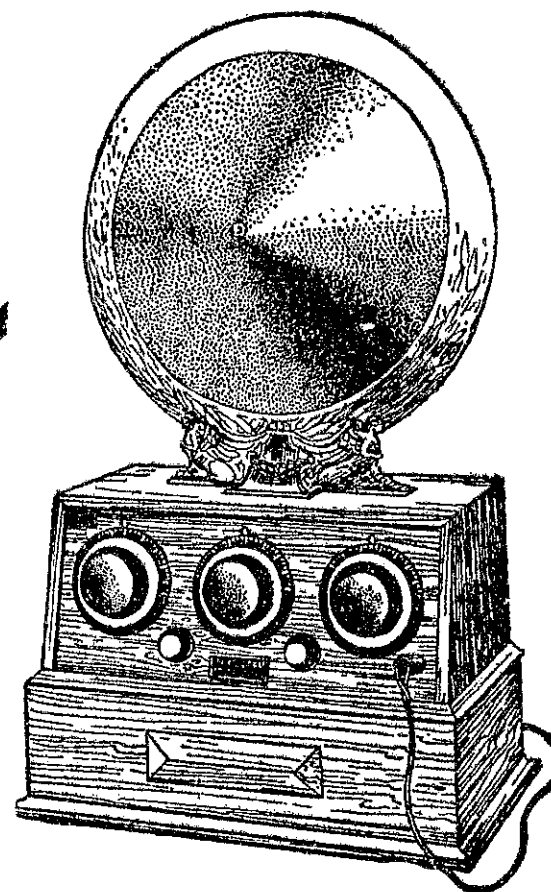
MR. D. G. MITCHELL, honorary secretary to the Otago Radio Association, forwards the following letter to the station manager of 4YA:—

"Dear Sir,—The committee of the Otago Radio Association (Inc.) desire to express their appreciation of the manner in which you broadcast the news of the trans-Tasman flight from start to finish. They offer you their hearty congratulations on your rebroadcast of 3YA, Christchurch, on the morning of Tuesday, September 11. The reception was perfect, even from a crystal receiver's point of view. Wishing you the best of luck on any other future occasion.

IT has been reported by a leading English daily paper that there are 1200 different types of valves on the market.

strenuously turned down. Every house almost had a set which was turned on for half an hour or so in the evening. Mr. Crosse did not think that wireless was in any way damaging the evening newspapers.

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Low
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the
Flick
of a
Switch



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