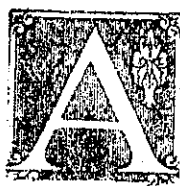


Southern Cross Returns to Australia

Radio Keeps Listeners in Touch throughout 23-Hour Trip

THE return flight of the Southern Cross to Australia has been successfully accomplished and through broadcasting the people of New Zealand and Australia were enabled to keep closely in touch from start to finish. Intense interest was taken in the flight and all associated with it. The public was hungry for news and thanks to the assistance rendered by the Post and Telegraph Department a service so complete and satisfactory was given that it can be said the public was in touch throughout. Taking off from Blenheim at 4.54 a.m., the plane landed at Richmond aerodrome at 2.16, Australian time, or 4.16 New Zealand summer time, or an actual flying time of 22 hours 52 minutes. Heavy winds were encountered from the start of the flight but as the Australian coast was reached conditions improved, which, together with the lightening of the load of petrol through consumption, permitted higher speeds to be made.



ANNOUNCEMENT that the Southern Cross would leave on Saturday morning at dawn, was made from all stations on Friday evening, and full-time service promised listeners. Incidentally, the announcement ended a long period of tension for all stations. Since September 30, the date originally fixed for the departure of the aeroplane from Blenheim, the broadcasters have been on the qui vive. There was a prospect that any morning the hop-off would take place, without warning, just as happened in the case of the departure from Australia, so the Broadcasting Company made arrangements which would ensure all stations being ready for any emergency. For nearly a fortnight the company's operators were practically "standing to" all night. A telephonic system was arranged by which the company's representatives at Blenheim could advise all stations. At 3YA two of the staff slept on the premises. In all instances, a telephone bell was alongside each operator.

Farewell Messages.

TO witness the departure there was present quite a big crowd at the Blenheim aerodrome, the countryside having been advised by the flashing of the searchlight early in the evening, and again at 11 p.m., that the departure was a certainty, after many delays. Accordingly, soon after midnight, motor-cars from miles around began concentrating on the ground with a freight of interested passengers, so that by 4.30 there were on the ground over 600 motor-cars and several thousand people.

The duties of announcer for the occasion were fulfilled very ably by Mr. C. A. MacDonald, secretary of the Marlborough Aero Club, upon whose shoulders the weight of organisation in connection with the whole event mainly fell. On taking up the microphone, Mr. MacDonald described the scene, after which the departing aviators were called forward to bid farewell to listeners.

"I am generally known as 'Smithy' when I'm talking to you," laughed the leader when the announcer had introduced him as Squadron-Leader Kingsford Smith. "We want to thank you very sincerely for your hospitality, and to let it be known how deeply we appreciate the kindness and courtesy of our New Zealand cousins. We hope to be in Sydney by 11 o'clock to-night. Unfortunately we can't make it as fast this time as we did coming over, be-

cause of the head winds we have to meet. Cheerio."

"Good morning, New Zealand," said Lieutenant Ulm, stepping up to the microphone. "Good-morning, Australia, too, if you can hear me. I want to add my thanks to 'Smithy's' for the kindness of everybody, from Mr. Coates downwards. Unfortunately we were not able to visit all the centres of New Zealand, but we know that you are all interested in our work. I want to tell you that we honestly tried to answer everyone of the telegrams and letters of congratulations we have received, and if one or two have been missed, we're sorry. Thanks very, very much, and good cheer."

Mr. Litchfield also thanked the many people who had sent him congratulatory messages. "Good-bye and thank you for the good time you have given us in New Zealand," he said. "Cheerio everybody, we will be in Sydney to-night."

"I am awfully sorry, the other chaps have spoken so long and have kept you out of bed," said the cheery "Mac." "Thanks very much for the wonderful time. Good luck to all you people in New Zealand and in Australia too if you can hear me. Hello, Richmond Aerodrome, get plenty of hot water ready for us when we arrive, and 'Stiffy,' get some of those cannon balls polished up. We will need them too. Good-bye, though, I won't say that, for I will be coming back soon. Au revoir, everybody."

The Start of the Flight.

THEY are getting into the 'plane now," said the announcer at Blenheim. "The engines are being tuned up and no doubt the roar is drowning my voice completely. All along the mile run-way people are lined up. Despite the early morning there are 500 to 600 motor-cars on the ground. The Southern Cross is now taxiing out of its hangar," continued the announcer. "The engines are working beautifully, and you will hear them clearly. The exhausts are spitting fireworks. The interior of the Southern Cross is brightly lighted and looks very comfortable in this very dull and cloudy morning. A good northerly breeze is blowing, and the morning would not seem to be an auspicious one for a flight to Australia."

All this time one could hear the whirring of the engines, the aeroplane being about 75 yards from the announcer, who said, "When you hear them accelerate, the 'plane will be off."

However, a lot of people then began to straggle across the run-way, and a motor-car, followed soon by two others, went down to clear the course. Then the whirr of the engines increased to a roar.

"She's off," said the narrator, "and she's already well down the run-way. The two Bristol fighters are off, too, and are already in the air. The Southern Cross has not left the ground yet, now she's in the air—at six minutes to five—after covering about 600 yards

of the course. She is mounting very slowly, now she's 100 feet up, and is beginning to circle the aerodrome. She's 150 feet up, and is heading straight for the hangar.

A moment later the roar of the engines proclaimed that the 'plane was directly above the microphone.

"She's heading E.N.E. in the direction of Cloudy Bay," continued the announcer. "Now the Southern Cross and the two Bristol fighters are over Blenheim, flying steadily. They are

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