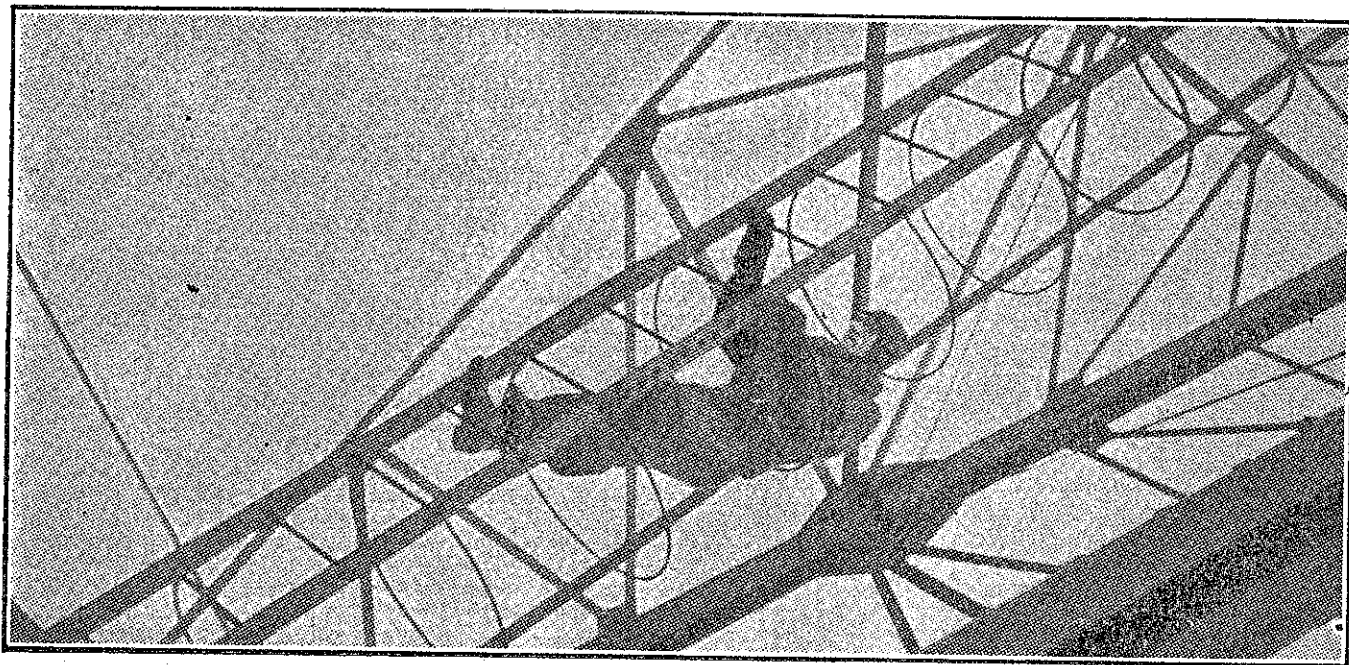


# ...SO RADIO DAILY



—By courtesy of BBC.

## IN AIR AND ON SEA, MEN LISTEN FOR ITS VOICE

**P**AINTED the usual nondescript official colour, there is a small wooden building on one of the draughtiest spots in Wellington near Lambton Quay.

But, somehow, it seems right that the air about that unimpressive place should be particularly restless. Perhaps it is only getting a little of its revenge on the people who live inside it.

For the small wooden building is the headquarters of the men in New Zealand who have organised the services which give no peace to the atmosphere; who use it to send their radio telephone messages, via Sydney, to London, to talk from New Zealand by radio telegraphy to the Queen Mary, midway on her Atlantic crossing, to chat with ships and remote Pacific islands, to carry messages to isolated parts of New Zealand, to guide airmen on their flights up and down the country and crossing the Tasman.

It seemed only poetic justice that an atmosphere that had been made into the slave of its masters should now and then buffet the building which houses the radio engineering department of the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department.

Though nothing to look at, the radio engineering building might easily become the most important building in the country. Already it is playing a part in the lives of New Zealanders that is growing steadily in value every day.

**T**HE plantation manager in Samoa, who wants to send word to London to sell his copra that day on the London market strolls in to the Island Post Office, where the palms outside the building themselves seem to glisten with the heat. His message is flashed by radio over the seas to New Zealand, through the organising work of men in the dingy official building in Wellington, is sent on by cable to London.

The commercial aviator flying blind in the clouds above the great white Kaikoura range speaks in his telephone, gets contact with a station of the radio

**T**HE invisible web of radio that is spun from New Zealand by the men in the service of the radio engineering department of the Post Office guides the airman on his daily flights, stretches its filaments all over the South Pacific, and reaches across the globe to London and the Atlantic. The log books of the radio service men in themselves, as they talk to ships and planes, tell a cryptic story that is one of the most romantic in the pages of New Zealand's 20th century history.

engineering men, checks up on his position, and the weather ahead of him and behind him, checks up on times, gathers data, which safeguards the lives of the people he carries with him.

The tourist in Milford Sound who wants to book his sailing berth a week earlier in Auckland isn't cut off because there happen to be no telegraph lines and no telephone lines. He sends the message through the Post Office radio in Milford.

**W**HEN his ship is foundering in a heavy sea off the New Zealand coast and the captain orders his radio operator to send an SOS, he knows that there will be a man listening day and night in the coast radio stations, listening for urgent calls from ships.

A trawler skipper in Cook Strait who knows no Morse can keep in touch with the shore by his ship's telephone installation just as easily as the young wife just parted from her husband can ring up Whangarei from the middle of the Tasman in the Awatea.

If there is some catastrophe of Nature that wrecks and isolates a whole New Zealand community so that telegraph lines and telephone lines are twisted out of their usefulness and roads are blocked and made impassable, there is a special radio service that is tested every month by the department and ready to deal with just such an emergency—so that medical supplies may be sent, and food, and, above all, so that news might be given and got in return.

These are some of the things that are done by the radio department of the service.

**I**T is radio, too, that keeps New Zealand in touch with its main dependencies in the Pacific. There are no cable routes to Western Samoa and the Cook Islands group. The long intangible filament of radio links them up with New Zealand.