

OLD TIMER FLIES AGAIN

just run-of-the-line airway pilots of the sort that could be hired anywhere for a few pounds a week. Some smaller venture that would make the headlines was necessary before anyone would take their big ambition seriously. So the pair climbed into their Bristol in June, 1927, and broke a local record by hurtling the 7,500 flying miles around Australia in 10 days 5 hours. After that they linked up with a third pilot, Keith Anderson, and set out for the United States.

Kingsford Smith and his partners landed in San Francisco on August 5th, 1927, to buy a machine and fly back to Australia. But they did not leave until nine months later, on May 31st, 1928. Financial and all other sorts of troubles besieged them, not least of them the result of the tragic Dole air race to Hawaii, when seven lives were lost, and support for aviation slumped in Western America.

They secured *The Southern Cross*, but it was not paid for and their hold on it was mighty uncertain. To raise funds, they made five attempts to break the German-held "sustained flight" record of 52 hours 22 minutes. On the fifth try they remained in the air for 50 hours 4 minutes, and were satisfied that it was impossible to get *The Southern Cross* off the ground on the available runways with a load of fuel capable of keeping her up any longer. In the five flights she had proved herself an ideal machine for the long-distance hops they contemplated over the Pacific. With a wing loading of 23.2 and power loading of 26.3, she had handled a composite load of 49.5, the heaviest ever lifted, and her engines had behaved magnificently. But what was the use of that, when it looked as if they would never be able to start on the big flight?

Their saviour was Capt. G. Allan Hancock, who bought *The Southern Cross* for them and advanced funds as well. Anderson had returned to Australia, but Smith and Ulm were more than ready. With C. C. Maidment, who had been Charles Lindbergh's mechanic, to tune their motors to perfection, they had no doubt of the ability of the machine or themselves.

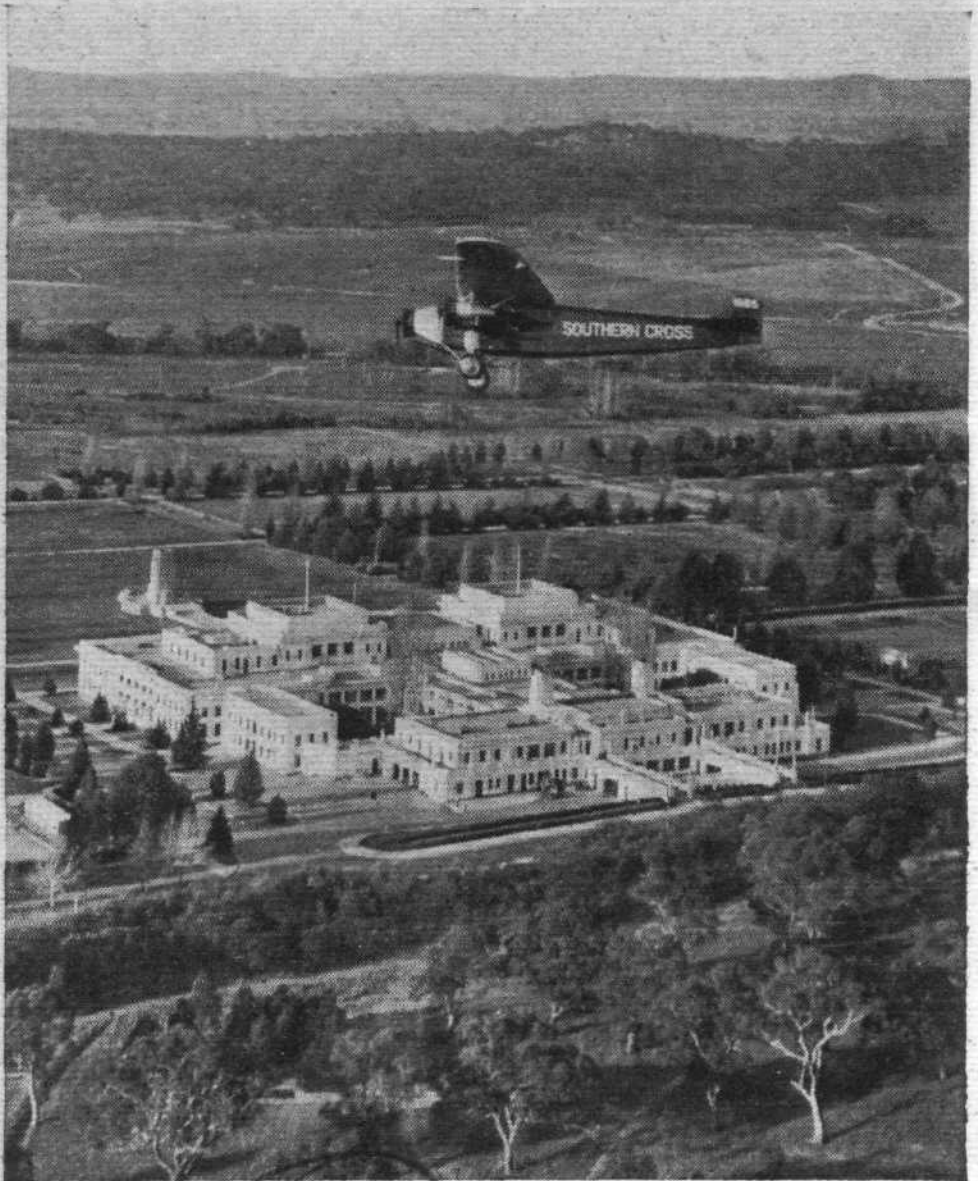
The Southern Cross carried 1,298 gallons of fuel in all its tanks. Its engines reached 1,800 r.p.m. and gave 120 m.p.h. at full throttle. Cruising speed was 94 m.p.h. at 1,600 revs, with fuel consumption of 11 gallons an hour. All that remained was to fly and navigate it over thousands of miles of hungry sea, through whatever storms and hours of darkness intervened.

Oakland to Brisbane

Kingsford Smith and Ulm, with two Americans, Capt. Harry Lyon and James Warner, as navigator and radio operator, took off from Oakland airport on May 31st, 1928. On the morning of June 9th they arrived in Brisbane, with 7,938 miles of ocean behind them, and enthusiastic crowds waiting to welcome them in all Australian cities.

That flight, and the many which followed it, were as full of adventure as all long-distance flights were in 1928, and Sir Charles Kingsford Smith has told of them in detail, and with humour and observation, in his book, "My Flying Life." Here, their very number and variety leaves no space for detail.

The crew received cash and honours for their great effort. Total of money from an Australian Government grant and newspaper and other subscriptions was more than £20,000, and trophies included the American National Geographic Society's medal and the trophy of the *Federation Aeronatique Internationale*. Warner and Lyon returned to the United States, and Kingsford Smith carried on with other crews.



OVER CANBERRA: Australia's most famous aircraft, *The Southern Cross*, flies over the nation's legislative headquarters—the Commonwealth Parliament House in Canberra—during its test flight. Pilots of escort planes with camera-men aboard found it hard to keep their speed down during run although *The Southern Cross* made up to 100 miles an hour.

First, *The Southern Cross* made a non-stop dash of 2,090 miles across Australia. Then she was made ready for a comparatively short but extremely hazardous flight from Australia to New Zealand, over the Tasman Sea. "Doc" Maidment came to Australia to look after the engines, and both mechanical and flying skill were needed. The aircraft fought through storms over one of the wildest seas in the world, and Kingsford Smith was almost tragically trapped when ice, which also damaged an airscrew, jammed up the airspeed indicator, causing him to miscalculate and hurtle hundreds of feet towards the water before he realised what was wrong. The first flight across the Tasman was completed on September 11th, 1928, and then the machine was flown back to Australia.

Australian National Airways were formed by Smith and Ulm on their return, and they decided to fly *The Cross* to England, to buy aircraft. They left the southern part of Australia on March 31st, 1929, with the far north-west port of Wyndham scheduled as their first landing point. Unintentionally misleading directions pointed by mission natives on the ground caused them to become hopelessly lost, and they landed in swampy, wild country, unharmed, but so bogged and short of fuel that it was impossible to shift the machine.

It was not until April 18th that *The Southern Cross* was able to take to the air again, and intervening days were bitter ones for the stranded, foodless airmen. Several times they saw aircraft which did not see them despite the great size of the wing of *The Cross* and the fires which they kept burning. By the time they were located, by Capt. Leslie Holden in his DH6, they were starving to death. It was terrible country, and during the search for them, their former partner, Keith