

PROPELLER AND ENGINE TROUBLE.

COOTAMUNDRA'S FAREWELL.

Sir Ross Smith and party left Cootamundra at 10.45 on Tuesday morning. Sir Keith Smith and the mechanics were up early, and had the engines tuned up, and everything in readiness for starting. At 9 o'clock a telegram stating that Mount Kosciuszko was enveloped in fog was responsible for the decision to fly straight to Albury, for which town an aerial message was received for delivery by parachute. The aerodrome is rather small, and Sir Ross Smith had a few anxious moments as to the direction to follow in the take-off. The wind was gusty and variable. He taxied to the extreme end of the paddock, and this gave him the full length of the aerodrome, and in this way he was able to clear an obstructing tree, the telegraph wires, and the railway station. The take-off was splendid, and without a hitch the Vimy went right away to a height of about 1000 feet. Then Sir Ross Smith turned and circled over the aerodrome and the town, he and the crew waving good bye to the assembled crowds. In less than 10 minutes the machine disappeared over the horizon, but in the interval the Curtiss machine, with Mr. Holman a passenger, and the Avro, in charge of Commander Love, were circling over the town. It was clearly a red letter day for Cootamundra, and the mayor and townspeople were cognizant of the fact.

Sir Ross Smith asked the "S.M. Herald's" reporter to convey to the people of Sydney and New South Wales generally his sincere and grateful thanks for the cordiality and generosity of the reception given him and the crew and the members of his crew. "I am," he said, "exceedingly sorry I was not able to participate in all the functions arranged in our honour. Had time and physical endurance permitted I would have attended more, as I realised it was not myself and crew merely who were being honoured by the representative

being honoured by the representative people of Sydney, but that they desired to show a sincere and intelligent interest in the science of aviation. Now that that interest has been awakened, I hope it will lead to very practical results. Sydney, as the commercial capital of Australia, must take a leading part, not only in commercial aviation, but in the aeroplane as a protector of the Commonwealth. Both these are vital matters for Australia."

Mr. Holman who was at the aerodrome to say good-bye to Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, later had an interview with the owner of the paddock with a view to its acquirement and that of additional land for an aerodrome for Cootamundra. Sir Ross Smith states he will probably be back in Sydney about Easter, when he will commence his world lecture tour on the aerial journey from England to Australia.

Sir Ross Smith passed over Wagga at about 11.30, but was compelled to descend at Bon Accord owing to propeller trouble. He again ascended, but was compelled to alight at The Rock owing to the propeller mechanism going wrong. After an hour the mechanics effected repairs, and the journey was again resumed. Later on Tuesday Sir Ross Smith and party were reported at 2 o'clock to have met with engine trouble near The Rock 60 miles from Albury. The trouble apparently was of a minor character, as the machine left The Rock for Albury at 1.45. Later on the 'plane was compelled by engine trouble to land on the Henty showground, and the journey to Melbourne was abandoned for the day. Leaving Henty at 6.30 o'clock on Wednesday morning they flew to Melbourne in a little over three hours, maintaining an altitude of about 5000 feet all the way.

Sir Ross Smith and party arrived over Melbourne at about half-past 9 on Wednesday morning, and landed at Point Cook at 10 o'clock.

The Governor General officially welcomed the airmen, and Mr. Hughes congratulated them on their achievement.

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Sir Ross Smith, responding, referred to the delays which had occurred on the flight from Cootamundra. The mechanics, said Sir Ross Smith, worked their hardest to get the machine right, but were unable to do so. As a matter of fact, in their anxiety to reach Melbourne they had very nearly broken the machine and their own necks. Now that they had accomplished their objective they felt that they had done what they had set out to do, because when they left London it was for the purpose of flying to Melbourne.

The presentation of the Commonwealth Government's prize of £10 000 has been postponed until Friday, when the party will be entertained at luncheon by the Federal Government.