

## NIGHT AIR FLIGHT.

### A Forced Landing.

Melbourne, Nov. 23.

Owing to an unexpected shortage of petrol in the tank of the De Havilland 9 aeroplane, in which the first night flight from Sydney to Melbourne was attempted during the week-end, Squadron Leaders Wrigley and Hepburn were forced to land at Violet Town, 105 miles from Melbourne. Up till that stage 345 out of the 450 miles between the Richmond aerodrome (New South Wales) and Point Cook (Victoria), the terminal points of the flight had been covered in six hours.

Reports of the landing at half-past 2 o'clock this morning at Violet Town, which is between Euroa and Benalla, on the main Sydney-Melbourne railway line, were received by the acting chief of the air staff squadron (Leader R. S. Brown) and the secretary of the Air Board (Major P. E. Coleman). It was thought that the unexpected failure of the petrol supply was due to a leak in the petrol pipes, as, otherwise, the supply would have been more than sufficient to take the aeroplane over the full distance.

Major Coleman said that Point Cook had been in wireless communication with the aeroplane, until after it had left Albury.

A message from Violet Town stated that the petrol pipe broke when the machine was over the township, and the machine had just sufficient speed to enable the airmen to turn outside the township and make a landing in a clear paddock. The lights of Violet Town, which is the only town on the route lighted by electricity, all night, were visible from Wangaratta, and this enabled the airmen to locate their position. They were able to telephone Point Cook after the landing, and assistance was quickly forthcoming from Seymour. Repairs were speedily done, and petrol obtained from a local store. A good take-off was made at ten minutes past 5 this afternoon.

The spot from which the machine left was marked by a grass fire, which was caused by a spark from the machine. It was quickly extinguished.

The machine reached Point Cooke at 10 minutes past 6 o'clock this evening without further mishap. Squadron Leader Wrigley was disinclined to comment upon the journey, but he said that had it not been for the mishap, which he said was a broken petrol pipe, the flight would have been successful in every way.