

TASMAN RACE STARTS

Harbour Spectacle

CROWDS SEE YACHTS SAIL FOR SYDNEY

Aucklanders lined the waterfront in thousands and boats of every description crowded the lower harbour to give an impressive send-off to the Tasman yachts on Saturday. With a sparkling day and a brisk southerly breeze, the race started in ideal conditions and, as the competitors ran out of the harbour under billowing spinnakers, their escort of small boats followed them, many having difficulty in keeping up.

Soon after 9.30 a.m. the flagship, Mr J. Lawler's 112ft launch *Ngaroma*, moved out to her position on the starting line off Orakei Wharf, followed by official launches and the speedy patrol boats. As soon as the approaches to the line were clear the competitors arrived and manoeuvred for the start.

Solveig First Away

The gaff-rigged *Rangi*, oldest boat in the race, looked as if she would be the first across, but had to put about at the last moment, allowing the Sydney yacht *Solveig* to get ahead right on the gun. The rest of the contestants came over in a bunch except for the Queensland entry, *Southern Maid*, which deliberately lagged behind to get a clear run.

As soon as they were across all the yachts broke out their spinnakers, although several appeared to be having trouble in setting them. As they rounded North Head the Devonport sloop *Hope* was first, followed by the Tauranga cutter *Leda*, with *Rangi*, *White Squall*, *Tara*, *Sea Wolf* and *Ghost* in a bunch. *Solveig* stood well out and *Southern Maid* came up from astern with a burst of speed.

As the fleet moved out past the Rangitoto beacon most of the escort dropped back. *Leda* was leading from *Rangi*, with the rest of the yachts strung out behind.

Crews Settle Down

By that time the crews had settled down to racing routine, and were preparing meals or taking their usual watches, getting ready for the life they will have to live in the ten days or so it will take them to cross the Tasman.

At 12.40 p.m., when the fleet reached Tiritiri Island, *Leda* and *Rangi* still led through the Whangaparaoa Passage. *Tara* was half a mile behind and inshore, but making good speed, while *Southern Maid* and *Hope* were strung out over about a mile. *Solveig* was well out, and *White Squall*, *Ghost* and *Sea Wolf* were more bunched about a quarter of a mile behind.

By Saturday afternoon the yachts were off Leigh. *Tara* led, with *Leda* about a mile behind, followed at the same interval by *Rangi*. *Solveig*, *Ghost*, *White Squall* and *Hope* followed in that order, with *Sea Wolf* nearly hull down on the horizon.

LEADERS BECALMED

Seven Competitors At North Cape

(P.A.) Yacht *LEDA* (at Sea), Sunday

Seven of the nine yachts were becalmed between North Cape and Cape Maria van Diemen at sundown today. *Leda* was five miles ahead of *Tara*, which was four miles ahead of *Rangi*. *Solveig*, *Hope* and *Southern Maid* were another mile back. *White Squall* was three miles further behind, and *Ghost* and *Sea Wolf* were out of sight astern. The wind had been very light from dead astern all day, and finally fell calm at 5 o'clock, the yachts just stemming the tide around the top of New Zealand.

Leda passed *Tara* at 9 o'clock on Saturday night, when the wind came abeam. *Solveig* passed *Rangi* and caught *Southern Maid* during the night.

The sea has been almost flat calm all day, and in bright sunshine the crews were eating and sunbathing most of the day. *Leda* spent the afternoon in the lee of Spirits Bay. The other boats rounded North Cape about 5 p.m. and also ran out of the wind. *Leda* was nearly clear of Cape Reinga and waiting for the tide to turn.

The yachts made runs of 150 to 170 miles in the first 24 hours.