

Huge Flying Boat Makes Test Flight

BOSTON (AP)—A 30-ton, 4-engine flying boat, one of the last of its kind, landed in Boston Harbor today at the end of the first test flight in seven years.

The huge craft flew from Baltimore in little more than two hours with Heustis I. Wells, 54, of Worcester, at the controls. Wells, a pioneer test pilot, said the plane will be used in a 4,200-mile non-stop shuttle service between Baltimore and Lima, Peru, starting next month.

The Sikorsky S44 is the only one of that type certified for commercial use by the Civil Aeronautics Administration. It has been remodeled and modernized at a cost of some \$300,000.

Co-pilot was Edward E. Slattery Jr., former Boston resident and now information director for the Civil Aeronautics Board.

Wells said he planned to confer with Robert T. P. Storer of Boston, principal financial backer of

the Aviation Exchange Corp., which will operate the South American line.

Wells plans to fly back to Baltimore Monday.

Wells said he plans to fly cargo to Lima and exchange goods with "head hunting" Jivaro Indians.

Wells plans to fly cargo to Lima, starting perhaps early in August, and to barter with "head-hunting" Jivaro Indians of the upper Amazon River area for silver and gold ore and other trade goods to haul back to the United States. Wells acquired the flying boat in 1949, and has since been putting her in shape—and making the preliminary arrangements for start of service.

The four-engine S44's were the last—and builder Igor Sikorsky himself says the finest—of a long line of Sikorsky flying boats with which Pan-American World Airways pioneered the Pacific and South Atlantic air routes. The S44

still holds the speed record for flying boats across the north Atlantic.

Wells said that four S44's are still in existence. The Navy bought one, and American Export Airlines used three in trans-Atlantic operations under Navy contract during World War II.

