

Jackson's Bay aerodrome was closed and abandoned during the course of the year.

Although all regular peacetime aerodromes were kept open and were available for use for purposes of R.N.Z.A.F. or in emergency, the majority were virtually on a care and maintenance basis with expenditure on maintenance kept to a minimum consistent with the use made of them or to prevent deterioration of the surface and established turf. Opportunity was taken, however, to proceed with the improvement and establishment of a satisfactory hard-wearing turf on those aerodromes known to have post-war value for commercial air services. The Public Works Department undertook and carried full responsibility for the administration and maintenance of all aerodromes not under direct R.N.Z.A.F. control.

Due to wartime Air Force requirements, quite a number of normal civil aerodromes were extended and improved. These improvements will be of considerable future value for civil aviation purposes, and the extensions will, in practically every case, be incorporated and retained in the aerodrome concerned. The following airfields were extended during the war period: Mangere, Tauranga, Milson, Rongotai, Harewood, Taieri, Westport, Rukuhia, Gisborne, Masterton, Nelson, Ashburton, and Haast.

The following new airfields, constructed during the war period, are being retained for future civil aviation purposes: Kaitaia, Kaikohe, and Waharoa.

During the financial year under review, 1945-46, no developmental works were in hand on civil aerodromes. Planning and the preparation of proposals for the improvement of civil aerodromes to modern standards was commenced as soon as the war situation ceased. Little progress is expected in actual construction until after the newly-constituted New Zealand National Airways Corporation has been formed, is functioning, and has recommended and received approval as to the future internal air services it is to operate throughout New Zealand. It is apparent that there is much work to be done to bring civil aerodromes to the standard required for the types of modern aircraft that it is anticipated will operate on these routes.

Government having decided that the R.N.Z.A.F. station, Whenuapai, is to be utilized in the interim period as the International Overseas Airport of New Zealand for overseas commercial air services operated with land based aircraft, arrangements to that end have already been made with Air Force. Temporary accommodation has been provided for the handling of civil airline passengers, and is to be erected for the technical and administrative staffs. Further development is necessary to provide adequately for the efficient functioning of airport terminal facilities. The flying-boat base at Mechanics Bay, which functioned throughout the war period, continues to handle the commercial air services to Australia, conducted by Tasman Empire Airways, as well as serving a similar function for marine aircraft of the R.N.Z.A.F. and allied naval services.

Although the newly-constructed airstrip at Rarotonga, Cook Islands, was the only aerodrome in the Pacific operated and maintained by New Zealand on a civil basis during the period, much preparatory work has been undertaken toward the taking-over from the United States Occupation Forces of airfields developed during the war at Faleolo, Western Samoa, and at Aitutaki, Cook Group. Similarly arrangements are in train to assume the responsibilities and commitments agreed to at the Civil Aviation Conference, Wellington (1946), whereby New Zealand undertook to provide in the Colony of Fiji the technical advice, direction, and development and maintenance of civil aerodromes and related facilities to be utilized on International trans-Pacific and South Pacific Regional Air Services.