

1946
NEW ZEALAND

AIR DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR 1945-46

Presented in pursuance of Section 7 of the Air Department Act, 1937

REPORT BY THE HONOURABLE F. JONES, MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE AIR DEPARTMENT, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1946

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the report of the Air Department for the year ended 31st March, 1946.

This is the first report since the termination of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific, and I am glad of this opportunity to express my appreciation of the outstanding services rendered to their country by all ranks of the Royal New Zealand Air Force in New Zealand and overseas throughout the war. Although a number of New Zealanders served in the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service in the Great War, this is the first struggle in which the Royal New Zealand Air Force has taken part, and it can be justly proud of its young and splendid laurels.

REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1946

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the Royal New Zealand Air Force for the year ended 31st March, 1946.

The outstanding event of the past year has been the defeat of the Axis Powers, followed by demobilization of the R.N.Z.A.F. Other important activities include air support to the 2nd Australian Corps in the Bismarck and Solomons Area; the use of the Air Force transport organization to facilitate demobilization; the despatch of a Fighter Squadron (No. 14) to Japan; and the maintenance of Air Transport Services to Japan, the South Pacific Islands, and within the Dominion for military and civil purposes.

As the previous reports submitted during the war period have necessarily been restricted, it is felt desirable to refer briefly in this first post-war report to the development of the R.N.Z.A.F. throughout the whole period of the war, without which it is difficult to examine this year's report on the final phase of the war.

MAJOR FEATURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE R.N.Z.A.F., 1939-1946

Although the R.N.Z.A.F. expansion programme approved early in 1937 was not completed on the outbreak of war, it was only the three years of development and planning that enabled New Zealand to participate fully in the Commonwealth Air Training Programme. Otherwise the delays involved would have materially reduced and seriously delayed our contribution to Allied victory in the air. This air-training organization in New Zealand continued to expand up to June, 1941, when it reached a peak intake of 4,500