

1947  
NEW ZEALAND

# AIR DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR 1946-47

*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, 1947

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the report of the Air Department, embracing the activities of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the Civil Aviation Branch, and the Meteorological Office, for the year ended 31st March, 1947.

## REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1947

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the Royal New Zealand Air Force for year ended 31st March, 1947.

During the period under review, which is the first clear post-war year, some progress has been made in the planning and formation of the post-war Air Force, in spite of the many difficulties which are the inevitable aftermath of war. This year has witnessed the completion of demobilization (July, 1946) and the re-establishment of the Regular Air Force on a voluntary basis under interim conditions of service required for the immediate post-war tasks. These commitments in order of magnitude have included the custody of war assets pending disposal, the operation of a quasi-civil transport organization within New Zealand and the South Pacific, the maintenance of a weekly Air Force transport service to Japan for "J" Force, the provision of a fighter squadron in Japan, and lastly the retention of a skeleton Air Force organization on which the post-war Air Force may ultimately be reconstituted, which includes No. 14 Fighter Squadron in Japan and No. 41 Transport Squadron, both of which are fully established, No. 5 Flying-boat Squadron in Fiji (nucleus), and No. 75 Bomber Squadron at Ohakea (nucleus). These operational units are to be supported by Flying Training, Technical Training, and Maintenance Units now in process of establishment. The strength of the Air Force at 31st March, 1947, was 652 officers, 3,352 airmen, and 241 Women's Auxiliary Air Force. This figure is inclusive of personnel employed on transient activities such as stores disposal, &c., and recruits.

Efforts to retain sufficient numbers of trained technical personnel to meet the minimum flying commitments have met with only partial success. Unless the position improves in the near future, Air Force activities over the next few years will be seriously reduced and the establishment of any operational units delayed. It is, in fact, upon the success attending the present efforts of the Department to retain a sufficient nucleus of experienced flying and technical personnel that the efficiency and economy of the Air Force in the next decade will primarily depend.