

ownership of aerodromes has not yet been determined, and is complicated by the fact that during the war the Government purchased or leased many areas of land which were incorporated in existing locally owned aerodromes.

The work carried out during the year has been restricted to maintenance and a multitude of minor improvements which, although not individually large, have absorbed all the man-power and materials which could reasonably be made available. A certain amount of building, using in the main ex-Service buildings, has been carried out to meet the needs of the New Zealand National Airways Corporation, particularly at Onerahi, Kaikohe, and Kaitia. It is apparent that much development work is required to bring the aerodromes used by the internal air services up to the standards necessary for the safe and regular operation of modern transport aircraft, but the present severe shortage of man-power, plant, and construction materials, and the huge programme of other national works outstanding, will undoubtedly limit the work which can be undertaken in the near future. The only aerodrome work of any magnitude authorized and commenced was the provision of a new aerodrome at Hokitika.

2. AERODROME FOR OVERSEAS SERVICES

The R.N.Z.A.F. Station, Whenuapai, continued to be utilized as the interim overseas airport and is the only designated regular Customs airport and airport of entry into New Zealand for land-based aircraft on international overseas services. It continues to serve its normal R.N.Z.A.F. function as well. Beyond the provision of minor temporary buildings for air-service operators and for airport functional purposes in handling passengers and of additional apron space for commercial aircraft, no developments of importance were undertaken.

The flying-boat base at Mechanics Bay, Auckland, continued to serve a similar function for marine aircraft, and handles the increased traffic of Tasman Empire Airways, Ltd., to and from Australia. The R.N.Z.A.F. Sunderland service to Fiji carrying civilian passengers also operated from this base. Buildings formerly utilized for Service purposes were converted and handed over to Tasman Empire Airways to assist in meeting their expanded technical commitments.

3. PACIFIC AERODROMES

With the withdrawal of the American Armed Services from occupation of a number of aerodromes in New-Zealand-controlled Pacific islands, opportunity was taken by the New Zealand Government to take over these aerodromes and to acquire from the American authorities aerodrome facilities and assets *in situ*. Such aerodromes were Faleolo in Samoa, Aitutaki in the Cook Group, and Fua'A'Motu in Tonga (British Protectorate). New Zealand's regional Pacific air services (operated in the interim by the R.N.Z.A.F.) stage through these islands to Rarotonga in the Cook Group via Fiji. All these aerodromes are now on a civil basis and are under the administration of Air Department, with New Zealand Public Works Department undertaking the work of maintenance and improvement to civil standards. Without any major works being undertaken, much has been done to convert these aerodromes to their new purpose. The construction of a new aerodrome at Niue has been approved, but a commencement has been deferred for approximately one year.

Fiji

By agreement entered into at the Civil Aviation Conference, Wellington (February-March, 1946), New Zealand, on behalf of the other interested British Commonwealth Governments, is responsible for the administration, operation, maintenance, and development of civil aviation facilities for overseas purposes within the Colony of Fiji. The commercial services of Pan-American Airways commenced to stage through Nandi Aerodrome, Fiji, during the latter part of 1946, while the airport was still in occupation by and under the control of the American Army Air Corps. New Zealand assumed operational control as at 19th December, and took over physical control and complete occupation as from 15th January, 1947.