

propagation of radio waves, which was carried out by Anson aircraft operating from Wigram under the control of Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, was concluded in December last.

AIR TRANSPORT SERVICES

Responsibility for the operation of quasi-civil transport services in New Zealand was terminated on the 31st May, 1947, when R.N.Z.A.F. took over the operation of the R.N.Z.A.F. internal air service performed by No. 40 Squadron. The South Pacific regional service was similarly taken over by the Corporation on the 1st November, 1947. The transfer of both these services was accompanied by the transfer of Sunderland and Dakota aircraft, and an appropriate backing of aircraft equipment and key operating personnel. Service air transport commitments of the R.N.Z.A.F. have been confined to the operation of weekly courier services between New Zealand and Japan.

After two years of continuous operation this courier service will shortly be terminated, bringing to a close a chapter of R.N.Z.A.F. air transport activity that reflects great credit on the aircrews and servicing personnel associated with the courier service. The route to Japan of some 13,000 miles via Norfolk Island, Australia, Morotai, Philippines, and Okinawa possessed limited facilities and involved approximately ninety hours flying through weather and seasonal conditions that differed to extremes. Following the Government's decision to close Rongotai Aerodrome in October, 1947, the general Purpose Flight was moved to Ohakea. This flight provided essential air "lifts" in New Zealand and carried out extensive fire-patrol duties at Rotorua during the summer months. A summary of air transport statistics is given in Appendix C.

ANCILLARY SERVICES

Meteorological Services.—The Meteorological Service required by the Air Force is provided by the Meteorological Branch of Air Department. The report of the Director appears in a separate section of this report. The extent of the service available during the year has, of necessity, been on a restricted scale due to shortage of staff.

Air Traffic Control Division.—The direction of the single flying control organization within New Zealand has been transferred from the R.N.Z.A.F. to the Civil Aviation Branch of Air Department, but the appointment of the Director of Air Traffic Control (D.A.T.C.) in the R.N.Z.A.F. is also held by the Controller of Air Traffic Control, Air Department. The Air Traffic Control Division is concerned with the movements of both civil and military aircraft within the New Zealand control area, and its organization is such that in case of national emergency it may readily revert to the operational control of the R.N.Z.A.F. as part of the air defence system.

Air-sea Rescue.—The Air Force maintains aircraft at readiness for search and rescue duties in accordance with New Zealand international obligations under the provisions of ICAO. Search and rescue activities are co-ordinated by the Air Traffic Control organization. During the year the Air Force has taken part in a total of thirty-five search and/or rescue operations, comprising searches for missing launches and aircraft and flights to the Chatham Islands and Pacific Islands to evacuate urgent medical cases.

AERONAUTICAL RESEARCH

This year has seen the establishment of a defence science organization which comprises a Defence Scientific Advisory Committee and a Policy Committee (on a Chiefs of Staff level), together with subsidiary technical panels and a general secretariat (drawn from Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), responsible for research into such defence science projects as can be suitably prosecuted in New Zealand, and for participation in Commonwealth projects elsewhere. In order to implement these activities and to build up a satisfactory liaison between the Armed Forces and civilian science, a Defence Scientific Corps has been established and will be shortly recruited from University honours graduates.