

Surveys and investigations for new aerodromes or comprehensive extensions and improvements to existing aerodromes with a view to construction have been undertaken at a number of aerodrome sites, the more important of which are Auckland, Rotorua, Milson, Harewood, and Invercargill.

As a further contribution to the housing programme, residential accommodation for airport staff has been provided at a number of the busier aerodromes.

There has been little major development work undertaken at R.N.Z.A.F. stations. Work has mostly been confined to converting existing technical accommodation facilities and services from war to peace time requirements and in converting surplus buildings into residential quarters.

In accordance with an existing agreement, the Ministry of Works has continued to undertake all works maintenance at R.N.Z.A.F. establishments, and in the main a high standard of work has been achieved. My Department also continues to be responsible for and undertakes the maintenance on all civil aerodromes except a very few of the minor fields.

In the Pacific islands the Ministry of Works carries out all works, both developmental and maintenance, covering New Zealand's responsibilities for aviation in the South Pacific. These include an R.N.Z.A.F. marine aviation base in Suva, the International Civil Airport of Nandi in Fiji, the regional civil aerodromes at Nausori in Fiji, Tonga, British Samoa, Aitutaki, and Rarotonga, and a number of meteorological reporting stations. Other than the work of converting the former Service air base at Nandi, Fiji, to a civil establishment, little developmental work of consequence has been undertaken in the area. Preparations have been made, however, to carry out at Nandi Civil Airport the reconstruction and improvement of the existing runways, which have failed to stand up to the heavier aircraft loads and increased traffic to which they have been subjected.

The recommendation of the Commission which, last year, reported on the establishment of an international airport in Fiji was considered in November, 1948, by the South Pacific Air Transport Council. The representatives of the three contributing Governments—United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand—agreed on a location at Suva Point and to share the cost equally. The Government of Fiji, although not a contributing party, facilitated this decision by an offer to contribute the necessary land. My Government has accepted responsibility for the planning and construction of this airfield, and investigation and survey will be put in hand immediately.

IRRIGATION AND WATER-SUPPLY

In Central Otago, rainfall conditions varied considerably during the year and in some places were below average. This resulted, at Manorburn and Poolburn Dams, in depletion of irrigation supplies early in the season, but beneficial rains fell in February and March and the areas which had been showing the effect of dry conditions made an excellent recovery. In other areas where rainfall was low there was not the same shortage of irrigation water.

In Canterbury the rainfall was generally below normal, resulting in an increased demand on all schemes and better financial results than were experienced over the previous two years, since ample water was available.

On the Wellington water-supply scheme good progress has been made with tunnelling. The two longest tunnels, 2,226 ft. and 9,102 ft., were pierced towards the end of the year, and arrangements are now in hand to line them with concrete.

During the year there was practically no improvement in the steel situation, consequently little progress can be reported on the manufacture of pipes for the main pipe-line. A small quantity of steel held in stock is being manufactured under contract into 1 mile