

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1949

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on civil aviation for the year ended 31st March, 1949.

SECTION I—ADMINISTRATION

1. ORGANIZATION

Although there has been a considerable increase in the staff of the Civil Aviation Branch during the year, it cannot be said that the branch is yet in a position to fulfil its proper role or to provide the varied services now universally accepted as complementary to air transport in all its forms. World-wide factors have a direct bearing on conditions which are not by any means peculiar to New Zealand. A shortage of fully-qualified technical personnel is still a problem to all administrations, while extensive research is being undertaken in order to determine, from their multiplicity of designs, the best equipment and aids to navigation, to achieve the main objective—namely, safety in the air.

We in New Zealand have many problems which are largely local in character, and whilst solutions can and will be found it is not possible or practicable to initiate and pursue research work which would embrace all our requirements. It is therefore of vital concern to study the trends in larger countries, such as Great Britain and America, from whom guidance is available. In effect, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), with its various international conferences and publications, represents the channel through which New Zealand is able to obtain the benefit of what in pounds shillings and pence would entail research at an almost prohibitive cost.

In many directions it has been necessary to adopt practices and procedures which, although the best available at the present time, will assuredly be improved upon in the future.

Shortage of labour, both technical and otherwise, is a potent factor, particularly in the development of aerodromes and ground facilities.

Many proposals dealing with the internal organization of the branch are under consideration, and it is anticipated that, following the very comprehensive survey and recommendations made by the United Kingdom Mission, headed by Sir Frederick Tymms, this side of civil aviation will develop upon a sound basis.

The manning of units, both within New Zealand and in the islands, still presents many problems, but in all cases existing establishments have been able to meet their commitments.

The issue of notices and publications remains an important function, and particularly so the dissemination of aeronautical information. This vital service to pilots, operators, and all those associated with ground organization is now being brought into line with the standard practices and procedures as recommended by ICAO.

2. GENERAL

During the year New Zealand was represented at those Conferences which were considered important enough to warrant direct representation.

The Second Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was held in Geneva from 1st to 21st June, 1948, and New Zealand was represented by a small delegation including Mr. Foss Shanahan, Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, as Leader, and Mr. E. A. Gibson, Director of Civil Aviation. This Assembly, which was attended by more than 250 delegates and observers from 37 member nations, 7 non-member States, and 10 international organizations, reviewed the entire field of international air transportation.