

SECTION VI—AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND SEARCH AND RESCUE

The period under review marks the first complete year of operation by Air Traffic Control as a civil organization. Nevertheless, the service remains common to both civil aviation and the R.N.Z.A.F., and A.T.C. personnel requirements on Air Force stations are drawn from this organization.

It has been appreciated that in the event of future hostilities the A.T.C. organization, by virtue of its trained personnel and extensive communication network would require to revert immediately to R.N.Z.A.F. status.

As a result of the large increase in scheduled air traffic along defined routes between the main centres and in order to achieve greater regularity of services irrespective of weather conditions, certain controlled air routes were designated during the year, and on the 1st June, 1948, these routes were cleared for flight under Instrument Flight Rules.

The steady progress being made with the installation of additional radio navigational aids, together with the practical experience in this type of operation gained by both pilots and ground personnel is resulting in a service which has gained favourable comment from qualified aviation authorities from overseas.

Staff training has given some concern, but with the establishment of a school for A.T.C. in the near future this problem should be largely overcome.

To discuss common problems, several conferences have been held between this Branch and representatives of the operating companies and the New Zealand Airline Pilots' Association, which have undoubtedly been advantageous to all concerned.

The search-and-rescue organization, operating through the rescue co-ordination centres established at the four area control centres, has participated in thirty-eight distress incidents. On twenty-three occasions the assistance of search-and-rescue aircraft was required for operations involving eleven aircraft, ten marine craft, and two mercy flights. During these operations a total of approximately 923 hours was flown, covering some 138,360 air-miles.

The present search-and-rescue organization is primarily intended to render assistance to all aircraft in distress. With the increasing number and variety of emergency operations which the organization has been called upon to undertake, the need for a more comprehensive organization has become apparent, involving the co-operation and assistance of various Government Departments and other interested bodies.

Initial action to effect a widening of the scope of the present organization to co-ordinate the efforts and facilities of these Departments and organizations, especially in the rescue phase of operations, has been undertaken by Air Department.
