

1938.
NEW ZEALAND.

AIR DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON THE) FOR THE YEAR 1937-38.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

**REPORT BY THE HONOURABLE F. JONES, MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE AIR
DEPARTMENT, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1938.**

MR. SPEAKER,—

I have the honour to present to Parliament the report of the Air Department for the year ended 31st March, 1938. The Department was constituted on the 1st April, 1937, by the Air Department Act, and was charged with the administration of the Air Navigation Act, 1931, and the Air Force Act, 1937. In this, the first report, I wish to refer briefly to the events that led up to the formation of the Department. Shortly after assuming office at the end of 1935 a comprehensive review of the Defence Forces of the Dominion was made, and as a result it was decided to seek expert advice on the air defence aspect from His Majesty's Government in Great Britain, which made available to New Zealand the services of Group Captain the Honourable R. A. Cochrane, A.F.C., for a period of six months. Group Captain Cochrane arrived in New Zealand in November, 1936, and in December, 1936, presented a very valuable report, which was adopted by the Government as the foundation of its policy in relation to air defence. The programme provides for the expansion of the Regular Air Force by the formation of two Medium Bomber Squadrons, the establishment of a Flying Training School, and the establishment of a Stores and Repair Base; the creation of a Territorial Air Force; and the creation of an Air Force Reserve.

It appeared desirable to retain the services of Group Captain Cochrane during the expansion period, and arrangements were made for the extension of his service in New Zealand to two years.

The Air Force Act passed last year provided for the formation of an Air Board to be responsible for the administration of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. The Board consists of the Minister of Defence, three officers of His Majesty's Air Forces, and the Air Secretary. In addition, the Board is charged with the duty of considering all matters relating to Civil Aviation that have a bearing on Defence, and when such matters are being considered the Controller of Civil Aviation becomes a member of the Board.