

The service provided by the aeradio stations is not limited to the ground-to-plane transmission. A large amount of traffic has of necessity to be handled between the various aerodromes in order to assure rapid interchange of communications relating to meteorological conditions, passenger bookings, and other matters essential to the expeditious conduct of air transport undertakings. These communications have in the meantime been conducted by the same stations as are used to maintain the contact with aircraft in flight. Even at the present stage of development, however, it has been found that considerable congestion is caused, due to the use of the same wave-bands for the point-to-point and ground-to-air services. Arrangements have therefore been made to expedite the installation of four of the short-wave stations included in the programme. These transmitters will not be installed until the next financial year, but in the meantime short-wave receivers have been supplied to aeradio stations in the more congested areas, and the Wellington station has adopted short-wave transmission as a regular means of communicating with the aerodromes in its sector.

One of the most unique air services conducted anywhere in the world is that operated by Air Travel, Ltd., in the South Westland District. This company has provided a regular service over a sparsely populated and remote area with most beneficial results to the district, and many emergencies could be recorded in which the settlers have been rendered assistance which could not have been provided by other means. With the establishment of the Hokitika Aeradio Station, the company, appreciating the advantages of radio communication, fitted radio equipment in one of their aircraft. It became apparent, however, that for the maximum use to be obtained from the service it would be necessary for a remote station to be installed at the southern terminal of the service, and arrangements were therefore made with the Public Works Department to install an aeradio station at Jackson's Bay, where the major undertakings have required improved communications. This station, which was opened during the year, is of a pioneer nature. Initially it has only been possible to install low-powered equipment primarily designed to maintain communication with Hokitika in the north and Awarua in the south, but the ultimate scheme provides for the installation of a permanent station similar to that at present in operation at Hokitika and capable of working planes in flight in its area, as well as maintaining communication with the outside world.

Consideration has also been given to the wider problem of meteorological communications associated with the proposed trans-Tasman and trans-Pacific air services. For this purpose a reporting station at the Kermadec Islands was necessary, and an expedition under Mr. J. E. Anderson, of the Public Works Department, was therefore equipped and sent to Raoul Island, in the Kermadec Group, in July. This expedition was provided with the necessary radio equipment to establish a temporary station on the island, but its main task was to explore the prospects of establishing a permanent station and to report on the engineering work necessary to enable landing arrangements to be provided and reasonable conditions to be assured to the personnel who would be called on to operate the final establishment. A report covering all matters relating to the future control of the Kermadec Group has been received, and it reveals the possibility of establishing and maintaining a permanent station on the Island. The necessary engineering work is to proceed during the present financial year. In the meantime excellent work is being performed by the existing temporary station, which is proving of considerable value to the Meteorological Office. It was employed as a navigational beacon by the ill-fated "Samoan Clipper" during her flights between Samoa and Auckland.

The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific has also been assisted by supplies of certain radio equipment urgently required by the British authorities for the establishment of meteorological reporting stations at certain points in the Pacific, which, although not under the direct control of the Dominion Government, were regarded as essential reporting stations if satisfactory meteorological services were to be developed for the trans-Pacific air route.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. M. WILKES,

Group Captain,
Controller of Civil Aviation.