

CASH ADVANCES TO AERO CLUBS FOR PURCHASE OF TRAINING AIRCRAFT.

In August, 1937, the Government agreed to make advances free of interest to the "approved" aero clubs for the purchase of new and up-to-date training machines, such advances to be repayable over a period of three years from earnings under the Civil Reserve training scheme.

The following table illustrates the assistance given in this respect over the two years of operation of this scheme :

Year.				Voted.	Expended.	Aircraft purchased.	Clubs participating.
				£	£		
1937-38	..	..	..	10,500	13,100	11	10
1938-39	..	..	..	15,000	15,985	12	9

TRAINING OF INSTRUCTORS.

Owing chiefly to the demand for flying training created by the Civil Reserve and Air Force training schemes and to the absorption of a number of instructors by commercial air services, a shortage of licenced instructors was experienced during the year. In these circumstances, it was decided to proceed with the training of twenty-five of the more advanced club pilots and to introduce an additional licence to be known as an "Assistant Instructor's Authority." Owing to pressure of Air Force training, the service stations were not able to undertake the necessary training, and an agreement was entered into with the Auckland Aero Club, which commenced the first course on the 10th January, 1939, with eight pupils, all of whom were successful in passing the required tests at the conclusion of their two months' period of training. Further courses will be held during 1939-40.

THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AERO CLUB.

As a result of a conference of active aero clubs held in Blenheim on the 21st February, 1930, it was decided that a controlling aeronautical body should be formed with the following suggested objects :—

- (a) Co-operation between aero clubs in all matters.
- (b) Control of air pageants, &c.
- (c) The advancement of civil aviation generally.

At this conference a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution of a proposed New Zealand Aero Club, and as a result of a further conference held during June, 1930, the club was officially incorporated under this title on the 30th July, 1930. With the consent of His Majesty the King, the title "Royal" was prefixed to the name of the club early in 1938.

Since its inception the Royal New Zealand Aero Club has been the official means of communication in matters of policy between the constituent clubs and the Government, and has also been responsible to a considerable degree for the co-operation which exists between the various clubs and for many of the benefits now enjoyed by them.

The Royal New Zealand Aero Club is the Dominion representative of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, and during 1932 commenced the issue of International Certificates to pilots.

PRIVATE FLYING.

On the 31st March, 1939, there was a total of seventeen privately owned aircraft on the register, compared with twenty-five for the same date of the previous year. The amount of flying carried out by private owners in the current year was forty-nine hours. The private ownership of aircraft has steadily decreased in recent years, a fact which may be attributed to the better amenities and facilities offered by the clubs.

SECTION IV.—GROUND ORGANIZATION.

With the growth of interest in aviation, and to promote its development, the Government gave its approval to a scheme in September, 1930, for the establishment of a chain of landing-grounds throughout the Dominion. Previous to this, and for some ensuing years, the only aerodrome facilities available were relatively small privately owned fields operated by aero clubs.

In 1933 an Engineer of the Public Works Department was appointed to co-operate in the selection of suitable sites for flying-fields and to supervise their construction. Under this arrangement the Public Works Department undertook the investigation of selected sites, the preparation of engineering surveys, and the drawing-up of detailed proposals for development, which were submitted to the Civil Aviation Branch. Upon approval, the actual development work was also carried out by the Public Works Department.

A policy was adopted to encourage local bodies in aviation development, and the principle was established that, where practicable, the local bodies should own and control the particular aerodrome in their district, the Government materially assisting in its construction and development. Generally speaking, where the local body was prepared to provide a suitable site and a proportion of the development cost the Government found the remainder of the cost and undertook the construction of the field. Development work was concentrated, however, on a planned programme of providing aerodromes and emergency-landing fields to serve projected air routes.

Commercial air services were not permitted to commence operations until safe and suitable aerodromes and adequate facilities had been provided, and adherence to this principle has contributed largely to the efficiency of the services provided by operating companies.