

stores, and delivery has been obtained of very considerable quantities. A substantial addition to the building programme at both Hobsonville and Wigram has been undertaken, and satisfactory progress is being made in the construction work. It is hoped to complete the expansion programme by the 31st December, 1940, when the last Flight of "Wellington" aircraft should have been received.

In April, 1939, the United Kingdom Air Mission visited the Dominion and, after conferring with officers of the Department, submitted a valuable report for the consideration of the Governments of the United Kingdom and of New Zealand. The Air Mission was followed by the Pacific Defence Conference, at which representatives of the Defence Services of Great Britain and the Commonwealth of Australia were represented. Both visits were very much appreciated, affording as they did an opportunity for the most valuable personal contact between representatives of the New Zealand Services and the Services of other parts of the Empire.

The report of the Controller of Civil Aviation shows how great is the progress that is being made in connection with commercial air transport, and it indicates also the increasing readiness of the Dominion public to adopt this form of travel.

Of outstanding importance in connection with civil aviation is the completion of the arrangements for the inauguration of the Empire air service, and it is hoped that before the end of 1939 the trans-Tasman air service will be in operation.

I wish again to express my appreciation of the excellent work that has been done by all associated with aviation during my term as Minister of Defence.