

At the Flying Training School, Wigram, the following buildings, involving a capital expenditure of £75,000, have been completed: Station headquarters, main store, workshop extensions, guard-house, officers' cubicles, garages, additions to airmen's barracks, temporary hutments for airmen, married quarters (thirty-three residences), sergeants' mess, and ration-store.

The following buildings, which involve a further £110,000, are nearing completion: Two concrete hangars, one timber hangar, main store, water-tower, instructional building, officers' mess, sick-quarters.

The majority of these buildings will be completed within the next few months, by which time the station will have accommodation for about sixty aircraft in the five hangars and ninety officers and four hundred airmen in quarters. The administrative and technical buildings will be adequate for the complete Service training of eighty pilots a year.

At the Air Base, Hobsonville (Auckland), which is being converted into a Stores and Repair Depot for the Royal New Zealand Air Force, an explosives area comprising twelve stores for bombs and pyrotechnics has been completed, and additional barracks accommodation constructed. An aircraft-repair shop, four main stores, station headquarters, guard-house, and a wooden hangar are in process of construction. The total amount involved in the buildings completed and under way is £143,000.

Rapid progress has been made in the construction of an additional Air Force station at Blenheim. This station will involve a capital expenditure of £180,000. The construction of two timber hangars, officers' and airmen's messes, and barracks is well under way, and contracts for the remainder of the buildings required should be let before June. It is anticipated that this station will be ready for occupation next October.

At Taieri Aerodrome, Dunedin, a timber hangar is under construction for the use of the Dunedin Squadron, Territorial Air Force, and tenders for the other technical buildings and barrack accommodation required for this unit will be called shortly.

EQUIPMENT.

Early in the year under review five Airspeed Oxford aircraft and twenty-nine Baffin aircraft were received at the Air Base, Hobsonville, erected, and delivered to units. The former were despatched to the Flying Training School, Wigram, for advanced navigational training, and the latter to the Territorial Air Force Squadrons in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch. These Baffin aircraft have proved most satisfactory for Service training in the Territorial units, and have already carried out seven hundred hours' flying without any accidents to personnel.

Arrangements have been made with the Air Ministry for the issue of two hundred and fifty aircraft of these types at nominal prices as they can be released from the Royal Air Force. It is anticipated that this number will be obtained within the next two years. Orders have already been placed for twenty-four Gordon and sixteen Vincent aircraft, delivery of which is expected in June and August respectively of this year. Orders for the additional armament, wireless, and navigational equipment required to make these aircraft fully effective for operational duties have been placed, but this equipment has not yet been received.

The orders placed last year for the reserve of bombs, pyrotechnics, and aviation spirit are now being fulfilled, and deliveries amounting to over 50 per cent. of our requirements have already been made. The supply of aircraft spares, aerodrome equipment, including searchlights and beacons for night flying, and instructional equipment such as Link trainers and bombing teachers is slow, but under the conditions prevailing abroad it is most difficult to hasten delivery of this class of equipment. Four Link trainers, which are invaluable for navigational and blind-flying instruction on the ground, have been received, and are in constant use at the Flying Training School and the Territorial units.

Machine tools, specially designed for the reconditioning of radial engines, and test equipment for the examination and overhaul of aeronautical instruments, airscrews, and automatic controls, are on order for the Repair Depot now under construction at Hobsonville, and delivery should be obtained before the new shops are completed.

With the objects of simplifying the method of accounting for Air Force stores and facilitating the task of provisioning, the Powers-Samas system of machine accounting is now being introduced into the Service.

EDUCATION.

Education Officers have been appointed at the Royal New Zealand Air Force stations at Wigram and Hobsonville. The policy being followed is on similar lines to that of the Royal Air Force, the purpose of the system being to provide personnel with education facilities to obtain the requisite grounding in mathematics, physics, &c., so that they will be able to obtain the full benefit of the instruction in technical subjects. The scheme is, however, also designed to equip the men to return to civil life after completion of their periods of service. The importance of this aspect of Air Force training is fully appreciated, and, while very little has yet been done, it is hoped to develop the educational and vocational training as soon as opportunity permits. The Education Department is co-operating with the Air Department, and Mr. E. Caradus, the Senior Inspector of Secondary Schools, is attached to the Air Force in an advisory capacity. All stations are being provided with reference libraries. Debates are arranged by the Education Officers, and, apart from the vocational and general training, an endeavour is being made to improve the standard of education throughout the Air Force.