

RADIO LICENSING AND AIRWORTHINESS

Full responsibility for airborne radio and aircraft licensing was assumed by the Airways Division on 1st September, 1947. For the period ending 31st March, 1948, thirty aircraft were inspected for renewal or issue of Certificates of Airworthiness and radio failures totalled fifty-five. The New Zealand Civil Airworthiness Radio Requirements were compiled and have now been promulgated to all concerned.

Eleven applicants were examined for Aircraft Engineers' Licences, and of this number eight were successful.

RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION

Good progress has been made with the radio range installations at Christchurch, Wellington, and New Plymouth. The Christchurch and New Plymouth installations have been completed, and although some trouble has been experienced with the Porirua site at Wellington, that installation is sufficiently far advanced to be expected to serve as a vital link in the main trunk route on the introduction of Instrument Flight Rules.

The fan markers associated with the radio ranges at Auckland and Christchurch have been installed, but certain difficulties remain to be overcome in their radio performance. A site has been chosen for the fan marker for the New Plymouth range, and installation work will be commenced shortly.

The high-powered radio homing beacons ordered last year have now arrived in New Zealand, and preliminary survey work has been commenced in connection with their permanent installation and the erection of the 180 ft. steel towers associated with them. In the meantime it is proposed to install temporarily a certain number of the beacon transmitters in existing aeradio stations or, where this is not desirable due to site considerations, in temporary buildings of the military-hut type, to enable the provision of adequate radio navigational aid coverage at the earliest possible date.

A low-powered radio homing beacon is being installed in the new Kaikoura Aeradio Station, which will be opened for service shortly in conjunction with the introduction of Instrument Flight Rules. This station will fill a vital need for air traffic control purposes on the southern leg of the main trunk route.

The medium-frequency direction-finding stations continue to function, but are now little used. It is proposed to close these installations down when adequate homing beacon coverage is provided and ground-air communications are changed to high-frequency channels.

The New Zealand high-frequency direction-finding stations are in good order and continue to provide valuable assistance to aircraft on the Trans-Tasman and South Pacific regional routes. Preliminary work has commenced on the installation of a high-frequency direction-finder at Nandi in Fiji.

EQUIPMENT

Progress has been made with the setting-up of the maintenance organization required to enable the Civil Aviation Branch to discharge its responsibility for the efficient servicing of aeradio equipment. The Ministry of Works stores system has been adopted in principle, and the provision of essential workshop facilities has been planned and authorized.

Despite the lack of adequate facilities, work has proceeded on the reconditioning of war surplus radio equipment, and this will be considerably accelerated next year when the workshop facilities materialize.

All the equipment in Fiji and much of that in New Zealand is of American origin, and considerable attention has been given to the possibility of obtaining suitable spares and consumable items from the sterling area.

The responsibility for the field maintenance of the stations situated in the South Pacific islands has been based upon Nandi as a sub-centre, although every effort is being made to keep the absolute minimum of staff in the tropics, and to maintain the standard of efficiency rather by the supply of ample spare equipment than by technical services.