

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

During the year the Director of Civil Aviation and the Chief Aeronautical Engineer were appointed members of the New Zealand Advisory Aeronautical Research Council.

Three meetings of the Council were attended up to the time of Sir Ben Lockspieser's visit to the Dominion. This gentleman, who represented the United Kingdom Ministry of Aircraft Production, was able to furnish an outline of the programme under which units of the British Commonwealth would undertake to carry out specific research work.

The Chief Aeronautical Engineer was appointed a delegate to attend the Second Commonwealth Conference on Aeronautical Research held in Melbourne, and as a result of this Conference the Aeronautics Division is required to undertake certain research work.

A long-term project in relation to operational flight research, with particular reference to the investigation of gusts and the development of suitable recording-instruments, has already commenced.

Proposals have also been discussed and tentative plans drawn up for the provision of flight-performance-test equipment—in particular, V_g recorders and takeoff camera.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The Commission of Inquiry set up on 17th December, 1947, to investigate and report on the incident to one of the Tasman Empire Airways flying-boats has required the full co-operation of the Division, both as regards attendance at sittings of the Commission and in the resulting engineering and research work.

EXAMINATIONS

Three examinations for maintenance engineers' licences were held at intervals simultaneously in Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington, and Christchurch. Details are contained in Section X of this report. Setting and marking papers and conduct of oral examinations occupied 700 technical man-hours.

GENERAL

During the year a staff meeting was held over a period of three days of all technical officers in the Division. Considerable benefit in the internal organization of the Division's work resulted.

In the discharge of their official duties it is worthy of note that technical officers of the Division covered a total of 27,700 miles during the year, representing, in time, 12 per cent. of their working-hours.

SECTION VIII.—ACCIDENTS

The accident rate in commercial flying continues to be low, four reportable incidents occurred which caused no injury to any person and only minor damage to aircraft. In club and private flying fifty-four incidents were reported. Seven of these were fatal accidents, causing the death of three passengers and six pilots and destroying six aircraft. Two accidents in club flying resulted in injury to a passenger and to a pilot.

Non-commercial accidents which have an adverse effect on civil aviation as a whole, can be expected to decrease following the tightening-up of training procedures arising from the adoption of ICAO requirements and from the efforts being made to secure wider appreciation of the factors which cause aircraft accidents.

SECTION IX.—AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND SEARCH AND RESCUE

During the year the air traffic control organization ceased to be operated and manned by the R.N.Z.A.F., and is now established within the Civil Aviation Branch of Air Department.