

Throughout the year a twenty-four-hour forecasting service, seven days per week, was maintained at Mechanics Bay (Auckland), which provided the forecasts for overseas flights from New Zealand, but dwindling staffs necessitated a gradual reduction in the hours of service at other forecasting offices in New Zealand. Forecasts required at week-ends or other times outside their limited hours of service were prepared instead at either the central forecasting office (Wellington) or at Mechanics Bay (Auckland). Plans for establishing an urgently required forecasting office at Palmerston North Aerodrome, the operational headquarters of National Airways Corporation, could not be fulfilled during the year.

At the present time, forecasters are available at too few aerodromes and for too limited hours to provide all the personal briefing of aircrews desired, and the heavy load thrown on the few remaining forecasting offices has limited the amount of attention that can be given to individual inquiries at busy periods.

Several Commonwealth and international meetings relating to aviation meteorological services took place during the year. The first meeting of the Meteorological Committee of the South Pacific Air Transport Council was held at Wellington in August–September, 1946. The Director later attended a meeting of the Council itself at Canberra in December, 1946. A further meeting of the Meteorological Committee in Melbourne in January, 1947, was attended by the Director and the Officer in Charge of Aviation Meteorological services. The latter remained as a member of the New Zealand delegation at the South Pacific Regional Meeting of the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization at Melbourne in February, 1947.

The type of service being provided for trans-Pacific aviation follows generally the practices recommended by the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization, but the present observational networks throughout the area are below modern international standards, especially in the direction of radiosonde and radar wind-measuring equipment. Detailed plans to overcome the deficiencies were prepared at the S.P.A.T.C. (Committee of Meteorologists) and P.I.C.A.O. Meetings, and will be implemented as staff, equipment, and accommodation become available.

GENERAL FORECASTING

Forecasts for the general public, the press, and radio were provided from the central forecasting office at Wellington. District forecasts telegraphed at about 11 a.m. to the evening newspapers cover the period to 5 p.m. the following day and are supplemented by a "further outlook" for the succeeding twenty-four hours. Corresponding forecasts telegraphed at 10 p.m. to the morning newspapers apply to the period up to 5 p.m. on the day of publication and are also accompanied by a "further outlook" for the following day. The delay between the time of issue of newspaper forecasts and the time they are read by the public detracts considerably from their usefulness compared with those issued by radio.

Forecasts for the various districts of New Zealand and for Chatham Islands were broadcast from the central forecasting office over the National Broadcasting Service network at 7.15 a.m., 12.30 p.m., and 9.01 p.m. daily. The forecasts issued at 7.15 a.m. cover the period up to midnight on the same day, and those issued at 12.30 p.m. and 9.01 p.m. up to midnight on the following day. City forecasts for Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin were issued to the local ZB stations at 7.30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 9.30 p.m. daily. Those for Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin were supplied through the local branch offices.

Forecasts for shipping in New Zealand waters were broadcast twice daily through the Post and Telegraph Department station at Wellington. These forecasts are normally for areas within 300 miles of the New Zealand coast, but include advice, when necessary, on tropical or other severe storms further afield. Twice daily on a frequency of 1,840 kc/s a selection of weather reports for the special benefit of coastal shipping were broadcast from the Auckland, Wellington, and Awarua Radio Stations.