

Squadron also operated a Meteor Jet aircraft on loan from the R.A.F. in experimental and familiarization flying. The R.N.Z.A.F. have attached two complete transport crews, consisting of ten aircrew personnel, to No. 24 Commonwealth Squadron, date of attachment 1st April, 1947, for a period of two years.

Co-operation with other Services.—A series of naval co-operation exercises were carried out by Mosquito and Harvard aircraft with the H.M.N.Z.S. "Bellona" with the object of providing training for both air and naval crews (November–December, 1947). The Royal Navy aircraft carrier H.M.S. "Theseus" visited New Zealand in August, 1947, and 25 Navy aircraft, together with aircrew and maintenance personnel, were based at Whenuapai, where they carried out extensive flying operations from 30th August to the 13th September, 1947. Harvard aircraft co-operated with the Army in the calibration of the Searchlight Control Radar in the Wellington area (May, 1947). Mosquito aircraft also undertook Army co-operation exercises in connection with Army artillery shoots (June, 1947). With a view to providing A.O.P.s for the Army, flying training in this sphere has commenced, 7 Army officers having completed the first stage of this training.

R.A.F. Liaison Visits.—During the year 3 Lincoln aircraft of the Royal Air Force brought specialist liaison teams to New Zealand from the Empire Air Navigation School, Central Bomber Establishment, and the Empire Radio School. In each case lectures covering the latest trends in air defence, operational technique, and the application of modern equipment were given. Such visits provide the R.N.Z.A.F. with the valuable information and, besides keeping us in touch with overseas developments, they provide an avenue for the necessary practical integration of the Commonwealth Air Forces.

Statistics.—A summary of flying statistics is given at Appendix A. The level to which the maintenance capacity of the R.N.Z.A.F. has fallen is reflected in the decrease in the number of hours flown during the year under review: 1946–47, 38,094 hours; 1947–48, 20,927 hours; reduction, 17,167 hours. The drop in flying-hours, however, as shown above is partly due to the transfer of R.N.Z.A.F. Air Transport Services to the New Zealand National Airways Corporation.

MISCELLANEOUS FLYING ACTIVITIES

The Air Force can be usefully employed with considerable economy, subject to overriding Service requirements, on a variety of flying activities of considerable value to the State. These activities may be grouped broadly as follows:—

- (i) Services for State Departments, which may cover the provision of emergency precautions organizations, surveys, forestry and fishery patrols, aircraft rescue, transport to inaccessible country, soil conservation, manuring, seeding, &c.
- (ii) Scientific research, in which the Air Force is used as the medium for investigations into radio propagation, cosmic-ray activity, &c., and fundamental aeronautical research.

With regard to (i), an Inter-departmental Committee for the co-ordination of miscellaneous air services required by State Departments was established in 1946. The Committee has made some progress in the investigation of the problems involved, and useful work has been accomplished both by the R.N.Z.A.F. and the Public Works Department. No. 41 Squadron, with Dakota aircraft, has supported extensive deer-culling operations by air dropping supplies and huts to ground parties, and has dropped willow and poplar in the Gisborne area for soil-conservation purposes. The provision of light aircraft for forestry fire patrols at Rotorua during the fire-hazard season has been continued. These patrols are backed by a more extensive emergency organization at Ohakea. At all Air Force flying stations there are now facilities capable of providing the following services in case of a national emergency: supply dropping, dropping of type M dinghies, and the stretcher evacuation of casualties. Research into the anomalous