

Except during the period February–June, when the operating company found it necessary to ground its flying-boats in order to make certain technical adjustments, a daily service was maintained. During the period February–June the service was maintained, on a restricted schedule, by land planes specially chartered by the company; and, even after the flying-boats resumed, the daily service was supplemented by additional trips performed by the land-plane charters. Mails received by the land planes normally arrived at Whenuapai in the morning and made close connection with planes engaged in the inland services plying to southern centres. Air mails for southern offices arriving at Auckland by flying-boat in the afternoon were given onward despatch either by the Limited express to Wellington the same evening or by plane the following morning.

EMPIRE SERVICE

The thrice-weekly air service between Sydney and London operated regularly throughout the year. The Lancastrian planes which have figured prominently in the operation of this service in recent years have now been replaced by Constellation planes.

The weight of air-mail correspondence from New Zealand despatched by the Empire air service during the year was 59,222 lb. The total weight of New Zealand inward mail was 94,514 lb.

TRANS-PACIFIC SERVICES

Full use was made during the year of the British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines service operating between Sydney (and Auckland) and Vancouver, and of the Pan-American service plying between Auckland and San Francisco.

Until February the British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines service maintained a fortnightly direct service from Auckland, but, by using the National Airways weekly service to Fiji and the Tasman service to Sydney, additional mail connections were made with B.C.P.A. planes departing from Sydney. In February, however, the direct service from Auckland was increased from fortnightly to weekly, and with this change the flying-time was considerably reduced, with the result that mails closing in Auckland at 9 a.m. on Tuesday are now received in San Francisco on Wednesday at 9.40 a.m. (American time). Although under the existing time-table a connection with the planes from Sydney cannot now be made at Fiji, a mail closing on Thursday is being despatched each Friday morning by the Tasman service to connect with a B.C.P.A. plane leaving Sydney every Saturday and arriving at San Francisco on Sunday.

Pan-American World Airways operated a scheduled weekly service until the end of January, but, commencing with the first flight in February, a new schedule, providing for two flights each week from Auckland, was introduced. At the same time, the North American terminal of the service was changed from San Francisco to Seattle. Mails from New Zealand, however, are offloaded at Honolulu and forwarded without delay to San Francisco by a connecting service.

At the request of the United States Post Office, the New Zealand Post Office agreed to receive by the Pan-American service United States air parcel-mails in addition to letter-mails. The first air parcel-mail was received in New Zealand on the 22nd September. The service is at present operating only in the direction U.S.A. to New Zealand, but the question of the conveyance as a general practice of post-parcels and "other articles" on overseas air-mail services is being investigated.

The weight of air-mail letters despatched by the trans-Pacific services for the year ended the 31st March was 13,942 lb.