

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1949.

The Hon. the MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the work of the Meteorological Service for the year ended 31st March, 1949.

GENERAL

Routine services have been maintained on the same general level as during the previous year. Good progress has been made in the expansion of the rainfall-observing organization to meet the special needs of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council. On the other hand, much-needed developments, particularly in essential meteorological services for aviation, and in research, still await the appointment and training of additional professional staff.

By agreement with the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, and Fiji the New Zealand Service has continued to accept responsibility for the meteorological organization covering all British possessions in the Pacific east of longitude 170° E. Aviation aspects of this work are co-ordinated under the South Pacific Air Transport Council, and separate agreements with Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission are being prepared covering the provision of domestic meteorological services which are arranged as part of the wider scheme.

Several public lectures were given during the year by senior members of the Service to scientific and farming organizations.

A short documentary film, "This is the Weather Office," was produced by the National Film Unit and released throughout the country early in January. The film traced the various steps in the preparation of a weather forecast, starting with the making of observations by ships' officers, lighthouse-keepers, and others, and the transmission of reports to the Meteorological Office. It then dealt with the plotting of the information on the weather map, and final analysis of the chart and preparation of the forecast itself.

It has been pleasing to note during recent months that the Meteorological Service has received a considerable amount of spontaneous and favourable publicity in the press throughout the country. Constructive criticism is welcomed and can often be of great value. There appears to be a growing appreciation on the part of the general public of the value of the service which the Meteorological Branch can offer, and this is coupled with a more sympathetic realization of the limitations of the resources at our command, particularly as regards basic observational data and staff.

Pacific Science Congress.—The Seventh Pacific Science Congress included a Division of Meteorology, and the sessions, which were held successively in Auckland and Christchurch during February, 1949, were attended by a number of distinguished overseas meteorologists. The Director of the New Zealand Meteorological Service acted as Organizing Chairman of the Division, and Mr. J. W. Hutchings, Research Officer, was Organizing Secretary. All officers who could be spared without interrupting essential services attended the meetings. The papers presented, of which four were contributed by members of this Service, were of a high order, and were followed by valuable and stimulating discussions. Scientific officers in New Zealand of necessity suffer as a result of the geographical isolation of our country, and this opportunity of making contact with experts from overseas proved of inestimable value.

South-west Pacific Regional Commission of the International Meteorological Organization.—New Zealand acted as the host Government for the second session of the South-west Pacific Regional Commission of the International Meteorological Organization. The Conference was opened by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister on 12th