

STORIES of New Jersey

CONTROLLING TRAFFIC

When a scheduled plane is about to take off from Newark the transport company communicates by interphone with the Airways Traffic Control Station in the Administration Building and gives the flight plan for the trip. The pilot of the ship then talks by radio with the Traffic Tower, where there is a radio receiver tuned to the frequency of each transport company. Here the traffic operator tells the pilot whether he may take off and furnishes him with information on the degree of visibility, the direction and velocity of the wind and the air traffic in the vicinity. At the same time another of the Tower's staff records the name of the airline, the ship's number, destination, altitude at which it will fly and time of departure. The ship having taken to the air, the Traffic Tower immediately notifies the Airways Traffic Control of the departure time.

Incoming planes make direct radio contact with the Traffic Tower when about 20 miles from Newark. The voice of the pilot comes through his company's receiver: "WREE, WREE...American Airlines' Trip 12...Pilot Jones to WREE.... now over George Washington Bridge...go ahead with wind direction and traffic."

The Tower operator answers: "WREE to American Airlines' Trip 12...wind northwest, 20 miles, gusty...clear to proceed...two small ships southeast of field at about 1,000 feet...call when over City of Newark." When the ship is near the field, contact is again made with the Traffic Tower, and this time: "WREE to Jones, American Airlines' Trip 12...you are cleared to come straight in...small brush fire in area just outside field boundary." For private planes without radio equipment the Tower uses colored lights: red to remain aloft, green to come down.

Once a plane has left Newark it flies under supervision of the Airways Traffic Control, which regulates all air traffic from coast to coast through a network of communication with transport companies and airports. The Newark office is one of eight--soon it will be one of 13--Airways Control Stations placed at key points over the country and has authority over ports at Camden, Harrisburg and Allentown, communicating with them by a long-line intertelephone system. Its staff of 18 men, working in shifts, controls about 400 flights daily within an area extending 250 miles westward toward Cleveland, north to Boston, and 125 miles south to a point beyond Chester, Pennsylvania. Beyond these limits other Control Stations continue the regulation.

In the Newark office, on a large desk map of the United States, markers follow the flights of ships to and from Newark as indicated by half-hourly reports received from the various airports and airline companies, which communicate directly with the pilots. Progress of each plane is also noted on blackboards. As a further check on communications there are three dictaphones which record automatically every conversation to and from the office. Another method of communication is the teletype system, composed of three lines: one for sending and receiving general information, another for weather reports and a third for emergency.

The Airways Control has instituted the following safety rules: all planes flying the same route must be kept 15 minutes apart; if emergency demands a smaller time interval, they must fly 2,000 feet apart vertically; ships going south or west must fly at even-numbered altitudes, north or east at odd alti-