

*Vancouver International Airport*

I am told that traffic congestion at Vancouver has existed for some time, and that action to relieve it has been under constant review by officers of the department. I am told that one of the factors which contribute to the congestion is civil and military training, and that in June of 1954 consideration was given to the possibility of transferring these auxiliary training squadrons to Abbotsford. However, it was found that to locate these auxiliary flying units at such a distance from the city of Vancouver would cause a reduction in efficiency; and moreover the proximity of Abbotsford to the mountains made the situation unacceptable for modern fighter operations.

Since that time, however, we have asked the Department of National Defence if it would review the matter further, and my information is that it is under consideration at the present time. So far as providing alternative sites is concerned, we have requested our district officials to investigate other possible sites which might be developed as an alternative airport. One of the sites, for example, was located at Burnaby. The department conducted a detailed engineering survey which, regrettably, revealed the fact that the area was underlaid by soft soil and was not suitable for airport construction.

The district officers have continued to examine other possible sites, and I would say that every site mentioned to date has been found to have distinct disadvantages, because of the nature of the terrain, surrounding obstructions, or distance from the centre. And the civil operators have voiced strong objections to relocating flying training at any point very far removed from Vancouver. In all cases this factor has been one of the serious defects we have been met with in considering these alternative sites.

Tonight some hon. members have mentioned sites that might be considered. I am sorry to say my personal knowledge of the situation does not permit me to say whether or not these particular sites have been examined. But I may assure hon. members that the suggestions they have made tonight will be given serious study by my department, because we are most anxious to remedy the situation and to do so at as early a date as possible.

I would go on to say that in November of last year the officials of the city were informed the department thought that before long it would be necessary to notify organizations at present engaged in flying training at the airport that after a reasonable period of notice no further civil flying training activity could be conducted from the airport. I am sure hon. members realize how reluctant we

would be to take a definite step in that sense. The possibility of restricting the use of that airport to aircraft equipped with two-way radio has also been considered. The present traffic control tower structure is not big enough to house the additional radio equipment which would be necessary to put this program into effect. The tower could be enlarged or a new one could be built, and I might say this question is also under consideration by my department.

One cause of complaint in connection with the airport has been the conflicting traffic of seaplanes operating in and out of the seaplane base immediately to the south of the airport. The air traffic control has adopted the most rigid possible procedure with respect to seaplane traffic and has been able to co-ordinate it more closely with traffic using the runways. Another serious cause of trouble, and of course congestion, has been the lack of circulating taxi strips on the airfield. There is no taxi strip parallel to the new runway, 0826, and aircraft cannot move toward the take-off position on that runway until the runway has been completely cleared of aircraft. There is a provision in the 1955-56 estimates which, if approved, will enable a strip to be built paralleling at least a part of the runway this year, and we look forward to completion of the entire length by the fall of 1956.

I am sure hon. members will understand that the provision of these additional facilities will permit easier movement of the aircraft with less delay. There is also a plan to introduce an approach control as soon as equipment and personnel are available, and the estimated date is July of this year. This will permit the control tower to exercise more precise control of traffic in the vicinity of the airport.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, if I might summarize, I should like to ask that the following points be noted. First, that the handling of the seaplane traffic has been improved. Approach control is expected to be introduced in the summer of 1955. A circulating taxi strip for runway 0826 will be started in the summer of 1955 and probably completed in 1956, and the possibility of improving or enlarging the control tower is now under review. The Department of National Defence is considering the possibility of relocating training operations at Abbotsford.

Perhaps what is most important, Mr. Speaker, is that we are looking for a possible site for a secondary airport. I think I should point out that even after a site has been located it will probably take a couple of years before it is possible to bring it into use.