

had been entered into previously was not binding because the dyking charges in question had not been revealed by the owners of the property. No final determination has as yet been made in regard to that specific piece of property. The whole situation is quite open at the present moment, and the department is considering whether to accept the virtual contract that was entered into previously or whether to look for a new property in the vicinity of Chilliwack. I may say to my hon. friend that I shall be only too glad to receive from him any recommendations with reference to that site.

Mr. BARBER: I think the minister will recollect that I have discussed the matter with him. Since the difficulty developed I had an interview with these people when I was at home at Easter and they advised me that they had informed the official, who came there at the time and took the particulars, that there was a dyking charge. Apparently the owners considered that the person who bought it would continue to pay the charges just as the person who buys a piece of agricultural property continues to pay the taxes on it. It developed later, after the option was drawn up, that the dyking charge was in the form of a capital charge of \$50 an acre. The purchase price plus dyking charges is very reasonable for 160 acres. The property is at the present time used as a landing field. It requires very little to complete it, and \$150 an acre is very reasonable if you compare that with the cost of some other landing fields.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I was just going to ask my hon. friend: Does he consider that with the added charges it is a reasonable price to pay for an airport?

Mr. BARBER: I think anybody would say that it is a reasonable price in comparison with that of others which have been purchased. The field is almost as level as the floor of this chamber. There are five or six planes using it now. The unfortunate thing about the matter is that this land is owned by a farmer, and had it not been for this purchase being in contemplation he would have broken the land this year and put in a crop, but he has held it. We are in hopes that something will be done.

There is another point about this matter which the minister, coming from the coast, will quite understand. At the time of the fogs on the coast the fog drops down within ten or twelve miles west of this airport, which was selected by the civil aviation authorities when they went through selecting landing fields on a direct route to Vancouver. The fog at certain times is so thick that it is

impossible to drive or fly through it. The airmen strike the fog within ten or twelve miles west of this site which has been selected; when it is impossible to fly through they have to return to the landing field, and if this landing field were not there they would have to go back to Hope airport, about thirty miles further east; the landing fields are supposed to be thirty miles apart. I would strongly recommend the government to take over this airport which would cost very little to develop, and is being used by five or six airplanes to-day.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): My hon. friend throws a new light on the situation. He states that the official of the department who was there was made familiar with these dyking charges. This is the first time that has been brought to my notice. In the option that was given at the time these dyking charges were not included. The whole question now is this: With these charges, is this a reasonable price for the airport? My hon. friend says that it is the best site available. The whole situation is absolutely open and the department will be glad to receive any recommendations. As I have already explained, the situation was, I was advised, that certain incidental liens or charges had not been disclosed by the owners, and when the matter was referred to the Justice department they declared that the contract was not valid.

Mr. BARBER: I understand that. I have a copy of the letter. The option expired in January.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Yes, so I understand.

Mr. BARBER: I just wish to repeat that this site was chosen, I believe, by the officials of the air force branch of the department at the coast. They went over the line and considered this landing field to be on the direct route, and a natural landing field requiring very little work, and situated favourably east of the line where the fog breaks. When a farmer sells land to another farmer or anybody else and quotes a price of \$100 an acre, he naturally expects that the purchaser will continue to pay the taxes on it, and the owners of this property told the official that there was a dyking tax and a municipal tax. They never considered it a capital charge, and I would have thought that the official would go into a little more detail with the provincial government. I know the minister is deeply interested in this landing field. It was chosen, not by the previous government—and I had no say in the matter—but by the officials of the department who picked out these landing fields.