

on him from the minister for British Columbia and from the hon. member for New Westminster.

I wish now to make a few remarks with regard to that statement. When I made the correction the other day, I disputed the statement and described it as false and untrue. I never at any time brought any pressure to bear either upon the minister or upon the Minister of National Defence in connection with this or any other emergency landing field. The situation was this, if I may briefly explain it. These two sites, that at Chilliwack and the Langley Prairie site, had been contracted for and had been under negotiation some time prior to the election of 1935. When the present government came into office, the matter was still under advisement in 1936, and it had been suggested to the then minister, under whose department it was at that time, that is to say the Minister of National Defence, that these sites should be looked into, because it was felt at that time that as far as the Langley Prairie site was concerned, it was not the best one available in the district. When this was brought to the attention of the Minister of National Defence, it was pointed out by his officials that the field had been chosen after careful flights by competent airmen of the department. I differed with the point of view of the airmen and as a matter of fact I still differ with them. That, however, is aside from the point at the moment.

The fact is that the negotiations had proceeded so far—at least the information given me by the minister was to that effect—that the title deed had been taken from one of the parties, a Doctor Saunders, who had agreed to sell his farm as an airport at \$200 an acre. Not only had he given the deed over, but he had sold his buildings and contracted for another farm in the Sumas prairie, which is in the Chilliwack electoral district; and the department felt that it had then gone too far to stop. Hence, I understand, the negotiation was finally completed some time late in 1936. I am not sure of the exact date, but I want to make the record clear. At that time, that is in 1936, I protested against the emergency field being purchased at that point, and still do; but I found, as I have stated, that prior to 1935, beginning in 1932, the late government had taken steps to acquire property not only in Chilliwack but in Langley Prairie and that the emergency field at Langley Prairie would probably not have been proceeded with had it not been for the fact that the deed for the property

[Mr. Reid.]

had been handed over to the government and Doctor Saunders had sold everything he had and acquired a farm elsewhere.

That is the only interest I took in the matter at that time, and I take great exception to the remarks made by the hon. member for Fraser Valley, who made the accusation, stating that he knew that political pressure had been brought to bear by the Minister of National Defence and by myself. When a member of this house says that he knows something, I think he should be asked to produce proof. I would not state in the house that I knew unless I was prepared to back up that statement. On the floor of the house I have made statements which I have always been ready to back up, and I say that the statements which I am now making are absolutely correct in so far as any actions of mine are concerned. At no time did I bring any pressure of any kind to bear upon any minister in connection with these emergency landing fields. I am glad that the hon. member for Fraser Valley is now in his place, because I wish to tell him that I did protest verbally to the then Minister of National Defence, under whose jurisdiction the two landing fields were, that the Langley airport site was not the best available in my district; but that statement, I believe, was not corroborated by the officials of the department who have to do with the choosing of these fields.

As regards the other site at Chilliwack, my information is—and the minister can correct me if I am wrong—that it would have been gone on with at the time the matter was under the Department of National Defence, but for the fact that it had been brought to the attention of the department that the taking over of the site there involved a dyking charge running over twenty or thirty years, and the department was not willing to recommend to the government that such charges on that site be incurred. As time went on, the jurisdiction and authority over these airport sites changed from the Department of National Defence to the Department of Transport, under whose jurisdiction they now are.

I wish to make this frank statement to the committee now, and I am glad that the hon. member for Fraser Valley is here and I can correct him. I repeat that at no time, either by word or inference, did I ever bring pressure of any kind to bear upon the department or the minister or any minister either to go ahead with the airport site at the present site or to interfere with the one in the hon. member's own riding, the one in Chilliwack. I trust that this explanation, which I have made honestly and sincerely, will be accepted by the hon. member.