

aerodrome it has a dual importance, and the necessity of maintaining it in serviceable condition is emphasised. When we visited Palmerston North the aerodrome had been closed to light aeroplanes, and the flying club was therefore out of action, for seven weeks because the surface had been cut up by heavy aeroplanes. There was, in those conditions, a risk of accident even to transport aeroplanes. In our view, it will be necessary to construct hard runways to maintain the aerodrome in serviceable condition for the purpose of the internal air services.

Hastings and Napier

288. The situation of these two towns, each with a population of approximately 20,000 and thirteen miles apart, provides an example of the need for joint planning. From the point of view of economic air transport operation and economy of airport development and operation, there is no question that these two towns should be served by one conveniently located aerodrome. This would be so even were the population of each to grow to perhaps two or three times the present population. Both towns are at present served by the Napier aerodrome, which, when current extension work is finished, will be adequate for the National Airways services. The aerodrome is two and a half miles north of Napier (four miles by road) and fifteen and a half miles north of Hastings. Hastings has a small flying club aerodrome at Bridge Pa, five miles south of the town.

289. Both towns are anxious to have their own aerodrome, and the Hastings civic authorities have proposed developing what is known as the Karamou site, just north of the town on the Napier road. This site, which is already fringed by building development, we consider to be too near to the town. The approaches to the aerodrome will inevitably be obstructed by surrounding buildings or the development of the aerodrome will interfere with town planning.

290. The Ministry of Works have already investigated a site midway between the two towns. Although the site is level and open, it is low-lying, marshy ground, and subject to flood. It has been estimated that the cost of developing an aerodrome on this site would be in the region of £300,000, which would hardly be justified. Before abandoning the solution of a joint aerodrome, we recommend that an exhaustive investigation should be made to endeavour to find a site for an aerodrome which will serve both towns equally, and with little more inconvenience than is involved for Napier with the use of the present aerodrome. Only if this is proved to be impracticable should two separate projects be approved. The cost of operating air services to serve two such towns separately would counterbalance any apparent immediate saving. This is a case essentially where national planning rather than local planning is required.