

305. We draw attention to the apparent lack of precautions against fire, and provision of static fire-fighting equipment during refuelling operations. Regulations should be promulgated prescribing the minimum precautions to be observed against the common risks—namely, static discharge, smoking, &c. In some countries more elaborate precautions are enforced as a condition of insurance of aircraft.

CHAPTER 22.—AERODROME ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

State and local responsibility

306. It is apparent that there is need for a considerable programme of aerodrome construction and development in New Zealand. The appointment of the Aerodromes Committee indicates that Government fully appreciate this, and our tours through New Zealand have reinforced our views. The difficult nature of the terrain magnifies the problem and increases the cost of the aerodrome programme which has to be faced. The development is not limited to the preparation of landing areas and runways. Hangars, workshops, passenger terminals, administration and control buildings, roads and supply services have to be provided on a considerable scale to meet the intensive development of air transport which is planned.

307. While Government have undertaken much of the construction work on existing aerodromes and undertake the maintenance at most of the aerodromes, partly as the result of the country's need in wartime, there appears to be as yet no clear-cut policy regarding ownership and the responsibility for development of the aerodromes required for civil aviation. In many places the land was originally acquired by the local authorities and it has been added to by State acquisition of more land. At some aerodromes passenger and administrative buildings have been erected by the local authorities, at others by Government. It appears that local authorities are still expected to bear part of the cost of development, though it is recognised that in most places they cannot bear it all. The situation is complicated by the fact that local authorities have been permitted to levy charges, usually in the form of a rental paid by the National Airways Corporation, to recoup themselves for some of their cost, while no charges are levied in respect of the larger Government expenditure. It seems desirable that a clear policy should be adopted and the relative responsibility of the State and local authorities determined.

308. Apart from questions of policy relating to nationalisation of air transport, many countries have recognised the need for the State to take responsibility for the provision of aerodromes and other air route organisation on which the development of air transport depends. It is very well known that airports and aerodromes cannot pay for themselves,