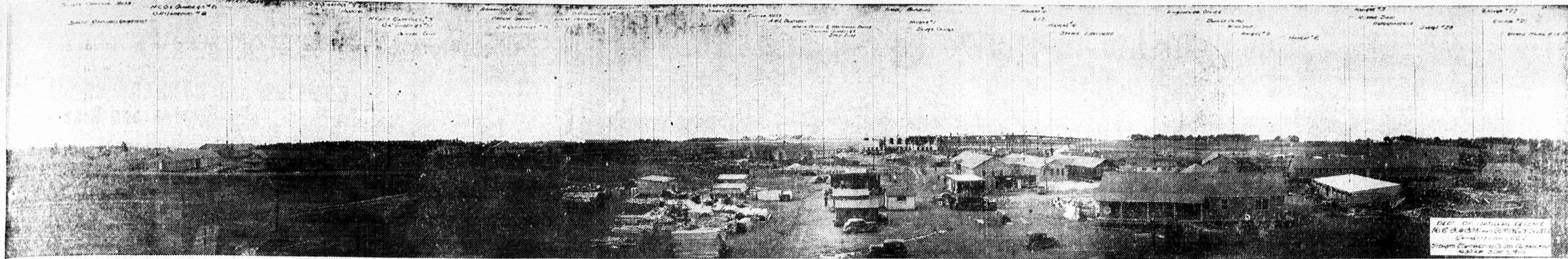


# NO. 5 BOMBING AND GUNNERY SCHOOL COMMONWEALTH AIR TRAINING PLAN NEARS COMPLETION AT CHARLOTTETOWN



Complete view of No. 5 Bombing and Gunnery School at the Charlottetown Airport, taken Sept. 7. The buildings in the foreground (centre) are the offices and saw-mill of the construction company. The permanent buildings designated in the picture are (from left to right): single officers' mess; single officers' quarters; O. R. quarters; N.C.O.'s quarters; N.C.O.'s mess; O. R. quarters; hospital; N.C.O.'s quarters; O.R. quarters; dental clinic; airmen's mess; parade ground; O.R. quarters; large canteen; O.R. quarters; drill hall; O.R. quarters; recreation hall; small canteen; civilian mess; A.M.L. teachers; watch office and observation tower; civilian quarters; turret building; hangar; superintendent's office; hangar; gunnery instruction school; hangar; engineers' office; supply depot; workshop; hangar; repair shop; headquarters; garages; guard house and post office. The airport runways are shown in the centre background of the picture.

## Camp Provides Every Facility For Air Force

### Municipal Airport Develops, In Few Short Months, Into Huge Establishment For Training Of Empire Air Gunners

The Charlottetown Airport, which was turned over to the Dominion Government for the duration of the war by the City Council on January 23 of this year, has been transferred from an ordinary civil airport to a large bombing and gunnery school under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

During the summer months the place was a hive of activity as carpenters and labourers worked day and night building large runways and erecting 36 buildings and six hangars at the airport. The field was not finished when the Government took charge but the work has been rushed in order to have it ready for the Royal Canadian Air Force to occupy this autumn. It is expected that the buildings will be ready for occupation within a few weeks and fifteen members of the R.C.A.F. are now on guard duty at the airport. Construction work will finish about Nov. 15.

The bombing and gunnery school has cost over a million dollars to complete and has given employment to over 700 men while it was in process of construction. Many tons of earth were removed to erect the runways and many million feet of lumber used to erect the buildings. The site consists of 275 acres of ground, 25 of which are taken up by the buildings alone, and is reached by a newly paved highway from the city. The airport is about 4 miles from Charlottetown on the Brackley Point Road.

Many important visitors have visited the airport during the summer including His Excellency, The Earl of Athlone, Governor General of Canada, Colonel, the Honourable J. L. Ralston, Minister of National Defence and Hon. Tadeuz Brzezinski, LL. D., Polish Consul to Canada.

The idea of an airport in Charlottetown had its inception back in 1938 when it was felt that this Province and city should get in line with the rest of the Dominion in the matter of air communication. Ex-Mayor E. A. Foster, who was then Mayor, saw the possibilities of the establishment of an air field here and sought an interview with Premier Campbell. The interview was granted and the Mayor and Premier discussed the need of and possibility for obtaining the assistance of the Federal Government in placing a modern airport in Prince Edward Island.

As a result of this conversation Premier Campbell had the matter brought before the Department of Transport in Ottawa and on May 21, 1939, he was able to report to the Mayor of Charlottetown that the Dominion Government had agreed to consider the establishment of an airport in this Province. It was also suggested that the City of Charlottetown take over the Upton Airport with some additional land to the east of it. An immediate survey of this site was advised by the Dominion Department.

**Site Looked For**  
This was all the encouragement needed and the City Council, on receiving this information, set to work to select a suitable site for the landing field. A meeting of the Council was called on June 14, 1939, and the matter was gone into thoroughly. As a result Ottawa

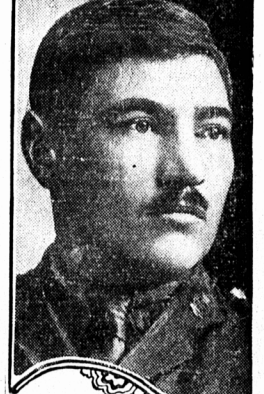
was wired for additional information. Mr. V. I. Smart, Deputy Minister of Transport at Ottawa, wired back next day stating that the municipality was to select the site for the airport and also agree to maintain it. The Department would assist in the selection of a site and would also undertake its development. The maximum amount which the Dominion Government was willing to contribute towards the development of the airport within that fiscal year was \$25,000. The City was also to make arrangements with a competent commercial operator of an airline to connect the airport with other provinces.

The prime reason advanced for the request of an airport in this Province was to put Prince Edward Island on the air map, but the City Council also were at that time faced with a serious unemployment situation in Charlottetown. With the object of relieving this situation they left no stone unturned to see that the proposed construction of an airport here would become a reality as soon as it was possible. They continually pressed Ottawa asking for the actual work to start and in the latter part of June 1939 the department sent Mr. George G. Wakeman, District Inspector of Eastern Airways, to the province.

**Sherwood Site Selected**  
After viewing several sites suggested by the Mayor and Council,



HON. J. L. RALSTON  
Minister of National Defense



HON. C. G. POWELL,  
Minister of National Defence for Air



PREMIER T. A. CAMPBELL



MAYOR B. ROY HOLMAN

Mr. Wakeman finally decided on the present site on the Brackley Point Road near the city. In his general remarks about the site chosen, Mr. Wakeman said: "This site, known as 'The Sherwood Station Site,' is the best airport site found within an area of a radius of five miles from the centre of Charlottetown and is so open that it can be made a good airport for instrument flying or night flying, that will be necessary for regular scheduled services to and from Prince Edward Island to the mainland.

"The construction of an airport at this site can be done at the minimum of labour and expense, considering the general topography of the district, also the lack of local material for construction of hard surface runways. Perhaps the capital cost for the improved land may be slightly higher than the land of inferior sites, but there will be considerable savings in the total costs for development. The landing area can be made usable quickly and the construction of the airport accomplished in a short interval of time if such is desired."

#### Some Advantages Of Site

Other advantages of the site were its proximity to a good gravel road and paved highway, power, telephone and telegraph facilities, and the Canadian National Railway.

The greater part of the area was improved and cultivated farm land. This condition and the contour permitted the construction of hard surface runways with a minimum of grading, labour and expense. The original site consisted of 178 acres of land. It was composed of four different farms: the farm of Mr. R. P. Cullen consisting of 70 acres; Major McCrae's 40-acre farm; Fred McCrae, 53 acres and 15 acres belonging to Matilda Frowe.

Situated on high ground well inland the site is generally clear of ground mists or local fog that

often occurs over lower land around the Harbour and City. Freedom from city smoke and a flying area well clear of the populated city areas, thus insuring freedom of noise over schools, hospitals, business and residential sections were other decided advantages in the selection. The airport would only be four miles from the city which was within a practical distance.

The only disadvantages found were that the direction open for future expansion was to the North and ornamental trees on Sherwood cemetery must remain; and the presence of a wooded area adjacent on the south east side.

The site was definitely selected as the most suitable for the establishment of the airport and options were taken on the required properties and plans to start the development made.

#### Mayor at Ottawa

In the meantime Mayor Foster accompanied by Councillor R. C. Chandler and City Recorder K. M. Martin had gone to Ottawa and interviewed Hon. C. D. Howe, Minister of Transport. After an hour's consultation they had the assurance of Mr. Howe that if the city would supply the field, the Department would sign a contract. It was further agreed that the labour used in the construction of the airport would be 100 per cent from the city. The Department also agreed this time to provide not more than \$35,000 for clearing, grading and installing such drainage as appeared necessary during 1939-39.

A part of the agreement was that the Department of Transport would have the right to one acre of land for which they paid \$1 each year. Recently it was decided by the Department that an administrative building would be built on this strip of land.

The Canadian Airways, Limited, favored the move of the City Council and wrote the Mayor a letter of encouragement on the splendid work the City Government was doing in having the air field built.

As the airport was to serve the province as well as the city, the Provincial Government also took an interest in it and supported the City Council in their endeavors. When the possibility of getting the airport became known the Government offered to pay half the cost of the project. In return they were to receive half the revenue derived from the operation of the airport.

There was much correspondence between the Council and Ottawa concerning the proposed airport during the summer but the work

was not getting underway. Continuous pressure resulted in a start on the project about the middle of September, 1939. At this time day labourers were employed clearing the land. The work was done under the direction of a foreman from the Dominion Department.

Such was the beginning of a project primarily intended as a connecting link with the air communication of other provinces, and which is now destined to play such an important part in the defence of the British Empire. Little did the members of the City Council know then that they were laying the foundation for a great bombing and gunnery school which would cost well over \$1,000,000. Primarily it was intended that the erection would cost in the vicinity of \$125,000, including the cost of the field which was \$30,000. At that time it was considered a great boon to the unemployed of the city.

#### Contract Awarded

Numerous delays held up the work during the autumn of 1939 and not much of the project was accomplished that year. In the spring of 1939 the Storms Contracting Company of Toronto, who were doing some road work in the province, were given the contract of completing the runways and heavy machinery was moved in and much earth removed from the surface.

A hard surface runway 3200 feet by 150 feet was constructed as a primary development.

The other runways, approximately the same size, were also graded. Thousands of truck loads of gravel were hauled and placed on the runways in the sub-grading process and a start on the hard surfacing made during the summer of 1939. Mostly heavy machinery was employed and the project was a disappointment as far as relieving the unemployment situation in the city was concerned. The work was discontinued when the snow came that fall.

Most of this development took place before the outbreak of war, and even early last fall the idea of having a bombing and gunnery school situated on the site was not discussed. During the winter the matter of the uncompleted airport was again the subject of a discussion in the City Council. At an important meeting held on the afternoon of January 23, 1940, the following telegram was sent to V. I. Smart, Deputy Minister of Transport, Ottawa: "At a meeting of the City Council held this afternoon the following resolution was passed, viz: 'Resolved that the Mayor and City Clerk be instructed to execute the agreement for the free use by His Majesty of the Charlottetown Airport in form as presented by the

Department of Transport and that full approval of this Council be conveyed by the Mayor by Telegram." It was signed, "E. A. Foster, Mayor"

#### Offer Accepted

This was the climax to an offer made by the Council of the use of the airport by the Dominion authorities for the duration of the war. This offer was made towards the latter part of December 1939. After some delay it was accepted by the Dominion Government.

The new City Council under the leadership of Mayor B. Roy Holman came into power on February 14, the question of erecting a bombing and gunnery school at the Charlottetown Airport was under discussion. Definite announcement came early in the Spring that the school would be established at Charlottetown.

Mayor Holman, realizing the importance of the project to the province, in general and the City of Charlottetown in particular, immediately offered the co-operation of the City Council in any way possible. The question of erecting buildings was discussed in May and on the advice of Hon. Dr. Cytus McMillan, the Mayor negotiated with residents in the district for additional property which was to be an extension to the original site. The options on the properties of Mr. Fred Horne and Mr. Harold Gillespie were acquired. The Horne property consisted of 35 acres and the Gillespie property of 62 acres. A number of buildings on these properties were sold and removed. The options expired on June 10th.

#### Agreement Reached

At that time Mayor Holman and Chairman of Finance Com. R. C. Chandler were in Ottawa attending a meeting of the Federation of Canadian Mayors and the Mayor received a wire from City Recorder K. M. Martin notifying him of the expiry of the options. He at once contacted the Department and reached agreement whereby the Department would purchase the Horne and Gillespie properties.

While Mayor Holman was negotiating and closing the deal at Ottawa, the Council was in regular session under the chairmanship of Deputy Mayor J. T. McKee awaiting a reply. Before the meeting was over, instructions came from Mayor Holman authorizing the Council to close the options that night and make payment to Messrs. Horne and Gillespie the next day.

Contracts for the erection of the buildings for the bombing and gunnery school were awarded to the Building Division of the Storms

(Continued on page 10, Col 1)



MR. J. C. PINCH  
Chief Engineer of Storms Contracting Company, in charge of construction work at the Charlottetown airport.



MR. HARVEY THORNE  
Senior Assistant Engineer, R.C.A.F., in charge of work.

## Romance Of Aviation In This Province

The history of aviation in Prince Edward Island is a very romantic one and had its beginning back in 1925 when Colonel J. S. Jenkins, M. D. of Charlottetown, set out to make the people of this province "air-minded." He formed the Gulf Airways Incorporated that year with the idea of establishing an air mail service between Charlottetown and the mainland. A similar service was also suggested by him. Mr. I. Y. Reddin was secretary of the organization.

Dr. Jenkins, seeing the possibilities of such a service, became greatly interested in having an airport built here. He entered into a study of the matter and for a number of years dreamed of the flying field which would be erected at Charlottetown.

In 1929 Capt. Eroll Boyd of Toronto and Lieutenant Harry Connor of United States landed in their plane "Columbia" at Tea Hill about six miles from Charlottetown. They were about to attempt a trans-Atlantic flight and due to weather conditions were stranded here several days. While in the province these aviators were guests of Dr. Jenkins at Upton farm who gave them every assistance.

In a few days favorable weather broke and the flyers left from the foot of Tea Hill and after a brief stop at Newfoundland made their Trans-Atlantic flight in record time.

This visit by the famous aviators was a great impetus to aviation in this province and once again people became interested in the development of this new means of communication and transportation. About two years later Dr. Jenkins decided that he would go ahead and build an airfield at Upton Farm. A great deal of work was accomplished in the early spring and summer but due to lack of machinery the project was not advancing very rapidly.

#### Air Pageant

It was during this summer that the great Trans-Canada Air Pageant



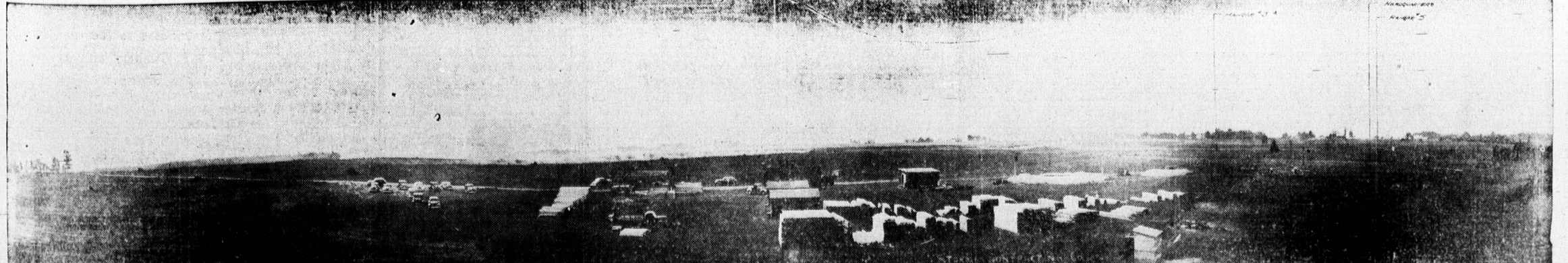
EX-MAYOR E. A. FOSTER

was touring the Dominion from coast to coast and the promoter of the Upton Airport seeing the opportunity of placing Prince Edward Island on the air map invited the travelling flyers to visit this province. Although the Island was not included on the pageant's tour, the offer of Dr. Jenkins was accepted with the provision that the Upton field be ready at the proper time.

After receiving this encouragement, Dr. Jenkins redoubled his efforts to have the Upton field transferred as quickly as possible into a licensed flying field and for this reason heavy machinery was borrowed from the Provincial Department of Public Works. Working at high speed, the men completed the runways and had the remaining part of the work finished about two days before the arrival of the aviators.

The great pageant was held on August 31 and besides the greatest Canadian flyers there were also a number of famous United States aviators present. Thousands of people attended the opening of the Upton Airport and also took in the Air Pageant. The entire crowd was thrilled by the exhibitions of flying given by such great airmen as G. G. Wakeham, Pat Reid, Don McPherson, Pat O'Brien, Bernard Martin, Jimmy Towne, H. S. Jones, Harry O'Leary, Jack Sanderson, and George Ross who was in charge of the pageant.

(Continued on page 10, Col 3)



View Of Bombing And Gunnery School Under Construction, July 25