

Dallas Still Has Time To Stop Fort Worth's Great Airport Grab

BY FELIX R. McKNIGHT.

It's a long story—the bickerings, negotiations, delays, stalling and subterfuge behind the Midway Airport deal that has culminated, temporarily, in a decision that could eventually give to Fort Worth air transport superiority it doesn't merit.

But, boiled down, this fact remains:

It isn't too late to remedy the wrong created by the decision to place the administration building, hangars, repair and maintenance shops and other development considerably closer to Fort Worth than Dallas.

The Civil Aeronautics Administration has assured Mayor Woodall Rodgers that the final chapter is still unwritten; that it will delay until the Dallas citizens' committee has had the opportunity of a hearing before it in Washington.

Too, from unimpeachable sources, it has been determined that there is no contract in existence with anybody—Harlingen, Fort Worth, Dallas or the CAA—for the exact site of the administration building.

On the engineer's plat the site is marked for the west side of the airport near Euless in Tarrant County.

But the American Airlines and Braniff Airways, who will jointly build the structure, have not contracted for any definite spot.

The way is still open for Dallas to get some justice.

In the beginning of this Midway Airport controversy, there was never any question about the administration building being placed on the north side of the field, skirting the new State Highway 183 from Dallas to Fort Worth. Both air lines favored that site.

No unqualified assertion is that. It came, only a few days ago, from one of the very interested parties—who, incidentally, still favors the old site.

Site Moved Suddenly.

But on Jan. 7, 1942, the original north line site, upon which Dallas had based all its negotiations, crashed out of the picture in a surprise decision by L. C. Elliott, regional director of the CAA, who negotiated a sponsoring contract with Arlington, and, for the first time, announced the administration building would be erected on the west side.

"It's a lot of hooley!" exclaimed a high CAA official in Washington when he learned of the switch.

"There is no reason to move that building from the north to the west."

But there was a reason.

Queried back there in 1942 when he made his announcement, Elliott admitted the change was a "compromise" designed to satisfy Fort

Worth in an effort to get the cities together.

That "compromise" designed to appease Amon G. Carter will be a costly one to Dallas if permitted to stand.

It means the gradual creeping of the airport's development in the direction of Fort Worth. That fact is easy to establish the air lines have already taken options on hundreds of acres extending west TOWARD Fort Worth.

Wartime development of aircraft, amazing in rapidity and design, makes it not only possible, but quite probable, that within five years giant cargo ships will be ripping the clouds loaded with freight for all parts of the United States and Latin America. It is a certainty, and it doesn't take a clairvoyant to make the prediction.

Those hundreds of acres now under option to the airlines will be utilized in the development of air transportation—hangars, freight storage, warehouses and everything else that will go to make Midway Airport one of the most important key points in the nation.

One of the great wartime aircraft factories in the Southwest now has extensive advertising contracts in twenty-five key South American cities. Good-will adver-

See AIRPORT on Page 7.

Airport

CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.

tising now; lacing tight the good neighbor bonds that have us locked in a common war cause.

But five years from now, the bombers and transports they now manufacture for military use only, will be converted into giant cargo and transport planes.

In the era of aviation development that is sure to come, South America will become a fertile market for their large, long-range planes in plying commerce in North American markets and elsewhere.

Future of City at Stake.

Not only South America, but the United States will be in the aerial cargo business.

Don't you see, Dallas, what it means to make a fight on the Midway Airport? It means a future industrial development that is slipping away from you.

It doesn't add up for a community of 420,000 supplying 80 per cent of the current air traffic in this thirty-mile arc encircling Fort Worth and Dallas to get pushed around to satisfy the whims of one man.

It isn't too late.

Competent sources doubt, even at this stage when some of the runways at the new Midway Airport have been partially completed, that even that construction would enter into changing the terminal back to its old site.

CAA regulations state that the terminal must be at least 750 feet from any runway. It can still be done at the old site, with negligible expense.

Dallas—through its Mayor, its special citizens committee, its chamber of commerce and many other organizations and through its citizens—now demands that the airlines heed the case of the city giving them their revenue and make this change before it is too late.