

THE STANSTED AIRPORT CONTROVERSY :

A PRESSURE GROUP STUDY

by

Anthony W. Stott

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, it is suggested that pressure groups other than interest groups play an important part in the British political process. Such a case is the Stansted Airport Controversy during which the local pressure groups succeeded in preventing the development of Stansted as the Third London Airport. This study examines the pressure group actions undertaken by the North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association, the Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils and the local district Councils. The study looks at their aims and objectives, membership, organization and attitudes, and their strategy and tactics as well as the ways in which they exerted influence and applied pressure. In addition, the role of other actors in the controversy are outlined as factors that affected the behaviour of the local pressure groups. Finally the factors that contributed to their success are evaluated and observations concerning the behaviour of protest pressure groups and their importance in maintaining the democratic process are offered.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAA	- British Airports Authority
BC	- Borough Council
BEA	- British European Airways
BOAC	- British Overseas Airways Corporation
EDM	- Early Day Motion
EFU	- Essex Farmers' Union
GLC	- Greater London Council
HMSO	- Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ITV	- Independent Television Authority
MP	- Member of Parliament (Commons)
MPs	- Members of Parliament (Commons)
NFU	- National Farmers' Union
NNI	- Noise Number Index
NWEEHPA	- North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association
PLP	- Parliamentary Labour Party
Q. C.	- Queen's Counsel
RAF	- Royal Air Force
RDC	- Rural District Council
SBR	- Standard Busy Rate
SDO	- Special Development Order
UDC	- Urban District Council
USAF	- United States Air Force

PART ONE :
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An Examination of Pressure Groups in Britain

CHAPTER ONE

PRESSURE GROUPS IN BRITAIN

The first two chapters will provide the theoretical framework for the case study. On the basis of an examination of the literature on British pressure groups, a definition of the term 'pressure group' will be put forward. Using this definition, an attempt will be made to classify the different types of British pressure groups. Consideration will also be given to the approaches for studying pressure group behaviour, the key variables which influence the activities of pressure groups, and the factors that make for the success or failure of the group to achieve its goals.

What is a pressure group?

Different terms have been used by political scientists to cover the concept of a 'pressure group'. S.E. Finer used the term 'the Lobby';¹ Allen Potter, 'organized groups';² J.D. Stewart, 'Pressure Groups'.³ 'Pressure Group' has been used widely in the literature,

1. S.E. Finer, Anonymous Empire : A Study of the Lobby in Great Britain. Revised Edition, London: Pall Mall, 1966.

2. Allen Potter, Organized Groups in British National Politics. London: Faber, 1961.

3. J.D. Stewart, British Pressure Groups : Their role in relation to the House of Commons. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

and will be used in this study. These different terms which have been used describe basically, though not always exactly, the same range of groups which operate in the British political process.

Before attempting a definition of the term 'pressure group', it will be useful to examine how others have defined the term. Generally it has referred to a narrow range of groups which are seeking to influence public policy or government without being a political party. Most definitions have common elements. W.J.M. Mackenzie described them as "organized groups possessing both formal structures and real common interests, in so far as they influence the decisions of public bodies."¹ J.D. Stewart, though, preferred a narrower field, and amended the last phrase of Mackenzie's definition to read "in so far as they seek to influence the process of government."² Robert McKenzie distinguished them from political parties because "they seek to influence policy decisions of politicians (and administrators) without themselves seeking to assume direct responsibility for governing the country."³ Harry Eckstein follows the same line in his definition as he sees pressure groups pursuing "collectively common political aims (by means other than attempting themselves to govern). They may do so simply because

1. W.J.M. Mackenzie, "Pressure Groups in British Government," British Journal of Sociology, Vol. VI, No. 2, 1955, p. 137.

2. Stewart, op. cit., p. 1.

3. Robert McKenzie, "Parties, Pressure Groups and the British Political Process," Political Quarterly, Vol. 29, 1958, p. 10; see also S.E. Finer, op. cit., p. 3.

of subjective agreements (shared attitudes), as do most 'other-oriented' (unselfish) pressure groups . . . or they may do so because of attitudes — generally, though certainly not necessarily, selfish — which are rooted in common objective characteristics" ¹ But this "involves the political promotion of interests and values, that is, the attempt to realise aspirations through governmental decision-making" and "something less than an attempt by the group to become itself the government, or even to seize for itself certain political offices which are vitally concerned with its goals" ²

Explicit in these definitions is the notion of groups seeking through the political process to achieve their goals. In other words pressure groups, while not seeking to be the government, seek to persuade the government to meet their demands. The pressure groups' role is a limited one, which is not concerned with the way the system is organized or who forms the government at that particular point in time. Francis Castles, on the other hand, offers a wider focus to his definition. He sees a pressure group as "any group attempting to bring about political change, whether through government activity or not, and which is not a political party in the sense of being represented, at that particular time, in the legislative body." ³ He sees the virtue of his definition as being that it

1. Harry Eckstein, Pressure Group Politics : The Case of the British Medical Association. London: Allen and Unwin, 1960, p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Francis Castles, Pressure Groups and Political Culture. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, p. 1.

stresses the fact that "pressure for political change may in certain political cultures . . . not be exerted to change policy, but to change the government, and indeed the form of government."¹ But this applies also to Britain because "even within our own political culture, . . . some groups are more likely than others to feel that the only solution to their problem is the removal of the government, and if necessary, the forcible imposition of their views."²

From the literature on British pressure groups, certain elements emerge to give a definition of a pressure group. First, there is some form of organization. This need not be very sophisticated. For instance, it may only have a name, a chairman and a secretary. On the other hand, it may have an elaborate bureaucracy with full time paid staff and offices. Organization provides us with a means of identifying a group. Second, this organization is in existence to promote a factor common to its membership. This may be a common interest or a common attitude to a particular subject. Third, this group will seek to promote this interest or attitude in the political process and will seek to persuade public decision-making bodies to adopt its demands. Fourth, this group, while seeking to influence the public decision-making process, will not itself seek to become or to control the public decision-making body. This would exclude, for instance, a group like a political party which seeks to gain a majority

1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. Ibid.

in the House of Commons or on a local council as a means of controlling the House or the council, but not a group which may run a few or occasional candidates as a means of seeking influence over decision-makers.

This definition would be adequate to cover most groups that have been traditionally conceived as being pressure groups. The definition, though, is narrower than that of Castles, which was quoted because it conceives demands being made upon decision-makers directly and involving a high degree of acceptance of the present political structure and system. But even in Britain, which is considered an example of stable democracy with a high degree of system acceptance, there are groups which do not accept the system and structure and which are seeking change in these directions.¹

The issue that has to be faced is whether a wider conception of the process of pressure group activity should be adopted. Under the definition already set up, there is the notion that there is direct influence or pressure upon the relevant decision-makers. Perhaps a more satisfactory view would be to consider pressure group activity not purely in relation to the decision-makers but rather in relation to the process of decision-making in the society in a wide sense. For instance, this would cover groups which in their activities are concerned with issues related to how society will distribute its re-

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90. For a study of fringe groups see George Thayer, The British Political Fringe, London: Anthony Blond, 1965.

sources, and the political values of society, without seeking directly to influence decision-makers to act.¹

A revised definition would include the following elements :

first, the group would have some form of organization; second, it would seek to promote a common interest or attitude or elements of both interest and attitudes; third, it would seek to promote these interests or attitudes in the political process in general, without necessarily seeking direct influence or pressure on public decision-making bodies; and fourth, it would not seek to become or control the decision-making body. This definition would allow the inclusion of groups which are seeking to change fundamental values in society, or which are engaged in self-help activities. It also allows for the recognition of the fact that even the more traditional pressure groups use indirect means to seek their goals, for instance, by creating a favourable atmosphere towards their goals. With the groups that will be studied in detail in part two of the thesis, it is clear that they are seeking directly to influence the decision-making process at different points, because they are concerned with a specific decision of the central government.

1. For example, Shelter, the national campaign for the homeless, is seeking to take action upon the problem of housing for the homeless without waiting for the relevant decision-makers to make their decisions. Nor is it seeking to influence directly the decision-makers into action, but instead by rejecting the traditional political channels, and by raising its own funds, it is trying to carry out direct action in this field. It hopes with the aid of its publicity campaign that society will be so influenced that decision-makers will be shamed into action to house the homeless. The Times, 7 and 10 October, 1968.

The Types and Behaviour of British Pressure Groups

Various classifications of the types of pressure groups have been put forward in the literature. The basic distinction adopted has been between 'interest' and 'attitude' groups.¹ While this distinction between the two is put forward, no real attempt, with the exception of Francis Castles, is made to study the different types of groups in terms of their behaviour patterns. Interest groups are seen as being representative of sectional groups in the society while attitude groups seek to promote causes that are based upon the shared attitudes of its members. Most of the classifications put forward are based upon this division into 'interest' and 'attitude' pressure groups.² But they do not distinguish pressure groups upon the basis of the behaviour patterns but rather upon the basis of whether they represent a sectional interest such as a trade union or are based upon a shared attitude to a particular question, such as the Abortion Law Reform Association.³

Part of the problem with these classifications is that the authors have only been concerned with national groups and then only with the more permanent type of national group. Interest groups play an important part in the British political process and as a result have been

1. Potter, op. cit., Chapter 1. Finer uses the same distinction under the heading of 'interest group' and 'promotional or propaganda groups'. Finer, op. cit., p. 4. Castles also adopts this basic distinction. Castles, op. cit., p. 2.

2. An exception is Finer who incorporates them into his classification without distinguishing them. Finer, op. cit., Chapter 2.

3. See Potter, op. cit., Chapters 2 and 6.

studied to the neglect of other types of pressure groups. In this thesis, a wider conception and categorization of the term 'pressure group' is being suggested. It is based upon the varying patterns of operation of different types of pressure groups.

The categorization is also based upon a new approach to the levels at which pressure groups operate in the British political system. It is clearly recognized that groups operate at the national level in Britain. But what is not yet recognized is that there can be local pressure groups which operate at the national level, and that there are also local pressure groups operating at a local level. Three levels of operation of pressure groups are being put forward here. First are national pressure groups, which draw or have a potential to draw members throughout the country and which operate on national political decision-makers because their demands can only be satisfied at this level, given the nature of decision-making authority. Other pressure groups will be based upon a locality with local demands which can be satisfied by the local decision-making process. But there are still other pressure groups which recruit locally and whose demands may be related to a local problem, but the focus of whose activity is the national decision-making process.

The basic distinction between interest and attitude groups can be broadened and applied at different levels of operation. Seven different types of pressure group can be identified: interest group, attitude group (which can be divided into norm-oriented permanent groups,

value-oriented permanent groups, and temporary promotional groups), protest pressure groups, public authorities, and self help/ community pressure groups. By combining the types of pressure groups and levels of operation, it is possible theoretically to identify twenty one categories of pressure groups for Britain (see Table One). Of course, some of these groups are more important than others in the political process. The groups to be studied in this thesis are local pressure groups operating at the national level because airport policy is the

TABLE ONE : CATEGORIES OF PRESSURE GROUPS

Interest National	Interest Local/National	Interest Local
Attitude norm oriented National	Attitude norm oriented Local/National	Attitude norm oriented Local
Attitude value oriented National	Attitude value oriented Local/National	Attitude value oriented Local
Attitude Temporary Promotional National	Attitude Temporary Promotional Local/National	Attitude Temporary Promotional Local
Protest Pressure National	Protest Pressure Local/National	Protest Pressure Local
Public Authorities National	Public Authorities Local/National	Public Authorities Local
Self help/Community National	Self help/Community Local/National	Self help/Community Local

responsibility of the central government. The categories that are of concern in this study are those of protest pressure groups (Local/National) and Public Authorities (Local/National).

Interest groups are based upon a shared 'interest' which is a concrete objective factor that its members have in common. These groups are concerned with the 'defence' of their members' interests vis-à-vis decision-makers. These groups are permanent, and have a bureaucracy of full time permanent officials who are responsible for conducting the affairs of the group.

These are the most influential and important type of pressure group in British politics because a dominant feature of British politics is what Beer has called 'Collectivist Politics', in which an essential ingredient is functional representation.¹ Such representation exists where directly affected interests through interest groups are brought into a process of consultation and negotiation with Government. It had developed with the growth of the Welfare State and the Managed Economy, which resulted in a large number of interests being intimately and constantly affected by Government.² Central to Collectivist Politics and the notion of functional representation, therefore, is the process of consultation and negotiation between interest groups and Government bodies.³ This process is crucial to the behaviour of

1. S.H. Beer, Modern British Politics : A Study of Parties and Pressure Groups. London: Faber, 1965, p. 70.

2. Ibid., p. 319.

3. Consultation involves the process whereby the Government seeks the views of the interest group without being bound to follow its views, while negotiation involves a relationship where the interest group and the Government or its Departments undertake bargaining and reach a binding agreement.

interest groups because many of these groups, unlike other types of pressure groups, have developed extremely close relations with government bodies. In this relationship they have resources such as expertise, knowledge and manpower which the Government needs to carry out its functions.¹ There developed therefore a close relationship, both formal and informal, between two institutions which need each other, involving consultation and negotiation in administrative decisions and legislation. This relationship is based upon friendly confidential contact in which the essential ingredient is mutual trust.²

This relationship is of paramount importance to interest groups, as it is through this relationship that they hope to achieve their objectives. This channel is suited to their objectives as these tend to relate to administrative details or policy within the general policy framework set by legislation. Today interest groups are generally concerned with the politics of detail rather than with the politics of issues.³ In addition, this relationship is important to them when they are seeking to influence legislation because it is easier to influence legislation before the Minister has made up his mind and before he has presented the legislation to Parliament. While it is still in the Department, legislation can be influenced with the minimum of effort for the maximum

1. Indeed some interest groups such as the British Medical Association or the National Farmers Union are an essential part of the administrative structure.

2. *Finer, Anonymous Empire, op. cit., p. 34.*

3. *Stewart, op. cit., p. 29.*

chance of success because the Minister will not at that stage lose face by granting the interest group its demands.¹ Indeed, interest group leaders place great emphasis upon these relations and distrust other means of influence because these might destroy the position they hold with the Government. "The more important consultation becomes, the more important it is that nothing be done which would disturb it."² Therefore, there is great constraint placed upon interest groups to stay in the world of consultation and negotiation. Normally, therefore, an interest group will not challenge the Government even when its proposals are rejected by the Government. Amendments may be tabled in the House of Commons but in a way that does not challenge the Government and is free from publicity.³ A group will only abandon this restraint when there is an immediate and direct threat to their existence through the destruction of the interest which they represent or when it is clear that the process of consultation has broken down.⁴ In that case, their activity moves away from consultation to campaign-

1. Ibid., p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 36. In this regard, Finer suggests a 'law of inverse proportion' in which he suggests that the closer and more exclusive the group's consultative status and relationship with the Ministry, the less it will use Parliamentary methods of influence. Conversely, the more precarious its relationship with the Ministry, the more it will use Parliamentary methods. Finer, op. cit., p. 43.

3. Indeed, Stewart sees the use of the House of Commons in this manner as part of the bargaining process between the group and the Government. Stewart, op. cit., p. 152.

4. Ibid., p. 109.

ing in which the aim is to enlist additional support by an open declaration of opposition to the Government.¹ This would also be the position of interest groups which have not established a close relationship with a Ministry.

Norm-oriented permanent Attitude Groups are permanent pressure groups which are based upon a shared attitude toward the particular issue or subject. These groups will develop a small professional bureaucracy which will conduct the affairs of the group. Norm-oriented groups will be concerned with limited objectives within the framework of the conventional political system. As permanent groups they will be concerned with trying to take action of a piecemeal kind on particular pieces of legislation or on particular decisions. For example, the Abortion Law Reform Association sought reform of the law on abortions.

The behaviour of these groups is not uniform because there are differences in their individual objectives. Normally they use more than one channel of influence. Some of these groups, though, have developed a pattern of behaviour similar to that of interest groups.² But most of these groups are likely to select Parliament as their major area of action. To do this, they will seek the support of an

1. Ibid., p. 93.

2. Some of these groups have established and others seek to establish close relationships with Ministries akin to those between interest groups and Government Departments. These groups, such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, hope to influence decisions by bringing their expertise and knowledge to bear upon decision-makers.

MP or MPs so that their points of view can be put in Parliament. Access to friendly MPs and Peers is important to these groups because they can use Parliament as a means of putting pressure upon the Government. Friendly MPs and Peers are also needed for action with regard to legislation either to promote and pilot Private Members Bills through Parliament, or to oppose, water down or strengthen Government Bills through amendments at the Committee Stage.¹ These groups will also seek to create a favourable political climate for their demands through efforts at influencing mass or specialized public opinion. This may be done by seeking to educate the 'public' and especially 'opinion makers' such as the press and the broadcast media about the need for the adoption of its demands and about the issues involved.

Sometimes a pressure group will have aims and objectives that will implicitly attach it to one of the political parties. Then it will seek to persuade that party to incorporate its aims and objectives into the party's policy programme and it will then press for the adoption of that policy once the party gains office.² This type of pressure group will have to work through the party's decision-making machinery, and may become a group operating solely or partly within the political party concerned. Some groups which command widespread

1. For example the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill: John Barr, "The Abortion Battle," New Society, 9 March, 1967, pp. 342-346.

2. For example CND: Christopher Driver, The Disarmers: A Study in Protest. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964, Chapters 3 and 4.

support sometimes have closely affiliated or associated groups operating inside a political party as a means of gaining support for the objectives of the group. They thereby directly influence the policies of the parties from within. The European Movement is an example. There are groups with close personal ties with the European Movement operating inside the Labour Party at both the Parliamentary and mass level of the party.

Value-oriented permanent attitude groups¹ are also permanent pressure groups which have some form of organization and often permanent offices. They are oriented to changing basic political and societal values and are prepared to go outside the conventional processes of decision-making. These groups are oriented to a fundamental change of attitudes, rather than piecemeal reform.² In effect, they do not seek to be co-opted into the pressure group network as norm-oriented groups do. Rather they will use unconventional means to achieve their aims. Their turning away from conventional means of pressure group politics in Britain is also the result of the fact that they are not accepted into the system and so have to find other channels through which they hope to change the values of society. Castles notes two major features of their behaviour patterns.³ First there is

1. Castles, op. cit., Chapter 7. There is nothing of a theoretical nature dealing with this type of group. The studies that exist are descriptive and these groups are often treated in them as incidental. Examples of studies of these groups, though not from the standpoint of behaviour are: Driver, op. cit.; Tom Driberg, The Mystery of Moral Rearmament: A Study of Frank Buchman and his Movement, London: Secker and Warburg, 1964; and Thayer, op. cit.

2. Castles, op. cit., p. 89.

3. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

a proliferation of aims and second there is a withdrawal from the rest of the community. In Britain these groups are small and badly financed, which has limited their means of exerting influence. As decision-makers will not accept their values and demands, their only hope is to gain public support at the grass roots. This can be done through publicity and direct contact with people. These groups tend therefore to be cells of the 'converted'. Their chief means will be demonstrations and public meetings which they hope will be noticed by the media and publicized. That process will be helped by the form of demonstrations. These groups, being small and financially weak, cannot use the normal means of reaching the public such as by public relations campaigns and advertising.

Temporary promotional attitude groups are formed to campaign to achieve a specific decision or piece of legislation in a definite short period of time. These groups will be campaigning groups which will focus all their activity upon creating the atmosphere for the adoption of their demands. The group's activity will be designed to mobilize the maximum degree of public support, either of a specialized or mass public. This will be done through advertising, public meetings, petitions and direct approaches to individuals. These groups could well be a co-ordinating committee of several other groups interested in a subject, but which do not want for many reasons to be directly involved. The other part of its campaign will involve lobbying of MPs and Peers as part of efforts upon the parliamentary scene. The degree of activity

will depend upon the resources that the group has in terms of membership, finance and political resources. These will also determine the effectiveness of the group.¹

Protest pressure groups are aimed against a specific decision already reached or an impending decision of a public decision-making body. Protest pressure groups are representative of a section of opinion about an issue. In the case of siting an airport in a particular vicinity, 'interests' by way of employment, or protection from excessive noise may underlie attitudes of the groups which are formed. The groups themselves are not based upon the shared objective 'interests' but upon the shared attitudes to the issue. In individual cases this may be motivated by the individual's conception of his 'interest'.

Protest pressure groups, because of the nature of their aims, will be temporary organizations of those directly affected or sharing the same attitudes to the particular decision. The temporary nature does not exclude the groups from forming a bureaucratic machinery and establishing an office from which the campaign is directed. The protest pressure group will direct its energies to a campaign to reverse or prevent a particular decision and the aim will be to make an impact as effectively as possible in the shortest time. Some protest pressure groups, though, are more concerned with mitigating the effects of a decision rather than its reversal. Once it has suc-

1. For example, the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, James Christoph, Capital Punishment and British Politics. London: Allen and Unwin, 1962, Chapters 5 and 6.

ceeded or failed to achieve its objective, the group will disband, or will develop into one of the other types of pressure group. Protest pressure groups, when dealing with decisions like the siting of airports or motorways, will be local in origin but national in orientation because decisions on these matters are for the central government. Of course, protest pressure groups can be local about local issues and oriented to local decision-makers. These could well have very little formal organization. Protest pressure groups are therefore mainly aimed specifically at the decision-makers concerned in the hope that they can be persuaded to prevent an undesired decision or to change their minds once such a decision has been taken.

The behaviour of protest pressure groups will be determined by the nature of the impending decision or decision which is the subject of protest. Related is the decision-making process and the state of the decision-making at that particular point in time. The decision-making process will determine which channels the group may attempt to use and from this will follow the strategy and tactics adopted by the group or groups in their attempt to prevent or to reverse a particular decision.

1. As government carries out more specific detailed decisions involving planning and transport facilities, protest pressure groups will become a more common means for people to express opinions about decisions of a highly technical nature which affect their lives in a direct manner, but which do not affect society as a whole. The building of a motorway in Berkshire is of concern to the people of that area, but is of no concern to the people of Lancashire or Essex.

Many of the decisions that fall into the subject matter of concern to these groups are planning decisions, dealing with such items as the siting of airports or roads. The early stages of protest activities may therefore be directed to the presentation of the objector's case before public inquiries which are often required or initiated in such cases. If there is a public inquiry, activity will centre on the case for the public inquiry and gaining substantial local or national support for that inquiry. This will involve for local groups the mobilization of local opinion and using the channels available for the expression of local opinion such as local Members of Parliament. At this stage there may be direct efforts in the form of public petitions to convince the Minister that he is taking or has taken the wrong decision.

Protest pressure groups will be formed to present a case at a public inquiry. In many cases this is as far as the protest pressure group will go. They will attempt to gain the most satisfactory decision about the site of the airport or the motorway route, on the basis that these are desirable improvements which must be accepted. The nature of the public inquiry may be a crucial factor at this stage. Part of the success of the North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association before the public inquiry was due to the fact that alternative sites were allowed to be put forward. This allowed the opposition, while not challenging the need for a new airport, to question the whole assumption on which the Stansted site was chosen. On the other hand, the objectors to the Gatwick site for the second London Airport, were

hampered in their opposition because they were only allowed to oppose particular aspects of the Gatwick site.

It is possible that these groups will register their complaints about a proposed scheme directly to the local or national decision-maker. A process of bargaining may be undertaken by the Ministry because it would rather have an acceptable scheme than to have to go through the cumbersome process of public inquiries. This process may be as far as groups will take their opposition. Some will take it as far as a public inquiry. It is rare that this type of group will take its protest further than the public inquiry stage.

Usually the public inquiry will back the scheme proposed so that it is often useless to carry opposition further because public support will fall off. But, sometimes, as in the case of the public inquiry into the Stansted scheme, the public inquiry comes out against the scheme. It is usual in those circumstances that the government will not continue the scheme, but again this case is unusual because the government decided to proceed with the scheme. At this point, the battle front changed from a limited one of a public inquiry into a full scale campaign which was to involve the use of Parliament, the political parties, and both the mass and specialized public.

If this stage is reached, the group's techniques will resemble those of other pressure groups operating at this level. There will be a concentration upon the specifics of getting the decision reversed. For instance, Ministerial orders will be opposed. The aim will be to mobilize the maximum possible strength to oppose and if possible

defeat the measures needed for implementation. This will be done by creating a situation in which it is politically untenable for the government to hold to its decision. For a group to succeed in this situation it needs to mobilize massive opposition to the decision at all levels, in Parliament, among specialized public and the mass public. For the maximum chance of success in reversing the decision, it should leave the government an escape route right up to the last possible moment.

Other protest pressure groups may be formed to oppose national decisions by national groups, for instance to legislation. Often these groups will be formed by interested groups as a means of co-ordinating opposition, on a more or less formal basis. But this type of group is not usual because interested groups tend to oppose themselves individually. For other types of national decisions, representations will be made to the relevant decision-makers, usually by established groups. Where a national protest pressure group is established, its activity will be centered upon the relevant decision-making process, usually Parliament. This will be done with interested members of both Houses of Parliament.

Public Authorities are organizations which carry out specifically delegated functions in a particular sector. The main purpose of these groups is to carry out these functions.¹ These groups will maintain

1. For instance, the National Coal Board is responsible for coal production and marketing, while the British Airports Authority (BAA) is responsible under the 1965 British Airports Act for the administration and operation of the four airports which transferred to it.

an organization to carry out these functions and they are not primarily pressure groups, acting in this role only on rare occasions when political decisions are being made which affect their interests in a way that does not satisfy them.¹ Pressure group activity is therefore incidental to these groups because they normally have direct channels to decision-makers, and because they have delegated functions of decision-making themselves. Unlike other pressure groups, they, as public authorities, are themselves the target of pressure group activity.

The factors that constitute this category of groups apply at the three levels of operation. Local Government units are Local/National when they act as pressure groups. This category is a difficult one in which to distinguish when a group is a pressure group and when it is not one. The best way to operationalize it is to consider what are the normal delegated functions of the public authority and what are the normal channels and areas of activity of the authority and then to determine if they are acting within these. Essex County Council could be considered to be carrying out their normal functions when it opposed, as the planning authority, the third London Airport at Stansted during the public inquiry in 1965-66. But it could be considered as a pressure group when it acted in opposition to the

1. For example, the British Airports Authority is pressured upon the question of aircraft noise around its airports as a public authority responsible. However, on the issue of the Third London Airport, they acted as a public authority pressure group when they openly tried to persuade and press the Government to stand by its decision for Stansted.

1967 White Paper on the Airport. In this period it was not carrying out its delegated responsibilities as the planning authority, but was the leader of a political campaign against the decision.

Public Authorities activities as pressure groups will tend to be limited. There will also tend to be greater inhibitions upon public authorities to the use of pressure tactics than there is upon other pressure groups. Nonetheless the group may seek publicity through the media, through reporting the activities and speeches of its leaders, or it may adopt an advertising campaign to place its views before the public. But its efforts are more likely to be directed towards Parliament to persuade members to raise the issues in either House.

Self help/Community groups are a new political phenomenon which have grown out of the feeling that it is impossible to gain demands through government and the growing propensity not to accept governmental inaction amongst certain groups in society. These groups are seeking to influence decision-making in the society in that they hope to create, by their example and action, an atmosphere and climate in which decision-makers are forced to meet their demands. But this is not the traditional model of demands being made directly upon the decision-makers and then waiting for the decision-makers to act. These groups have basically rejected direct approaches to decision-makers as their main focus of activity. Instead they are tackling their specific problem themselves. Shelter, for instance, is basically tackling, through its local housing associations, the problems of the

homeless and calling upon society to help by contributing to the campaign. It is only incidentally thereby throwing out a challenge to the Government to act in this field. Citizen Committees may be set up as a means of dealing with the problems of a particular locality, and would provide an example of a local self help/Community group. These groups may use outside resources to aid their own actions, but the essential feature is that people directly affected and putting the demands are themselves seeking to satisfy them through their own efforts. This does not exclude interaction with decision-makers, particularly if they can make their demands an issue which decision-makers take up; however, that is not the main focus of their activity.

Successful and Unsuccessful Pressure Group Situations

Finer notes that "success or failure, and then degree, depend on political conjunctions; on situations inside the parties and between both parties; and on the degree of public feeling."¹ Studying the situation at the Parliamentary level he identified three basic situations:²

a) Successful lobby

(Opposition + Ministerial Lobby) vs. Ministerialists

b) Unsuccessful lobby

Ministerial Lobby vs. (Opposition + Ministerialists)

1. Finer, op. cit., p. 75.

2. Ibid., pp. 75-79. Ministerial Lobby refers to the rebel or dissenting MPs inside the governing party, while the Ministers and loyal backbenchers constitute the Ministerialists.

c) Indeterminate situation

Opposition vs. (Ministerialists + Ministerial Lobby)

The pressure group under these terms is successful when the group can squeeze the Minister between the official opposition and his own rebel backbenchers. But the group will be unsuccessful if it is squeezed between the Minister and the Opposition, and finally the situation is indeterminate if it is a straight party battle, but this is failure because the group will not achieve its objectives.

The aim of the pressure is to create a political situation in which the decision-maker is forced into meeting its demands. Besides the situations put forward by Finer, others exist by the addition of other factors like public opinion that will affect the group's chances of success or failure:

i) (Specialized Public Opinion + Opposition + Ministerial Lobby)

vs. Ministerialists = SUCCESS

ii) (Specialized and Mass Public Opinion + Opposition + Ministerial Lobby)

vs. Ministerialists = SUCCESS

iii) (Specialized Public Opinion + Ministerial Lobby +
Ministerialists + Opposition Rebel Lobby)

vs. (Opposition + Mass public opinion) = SUCCESS

iv) (Specialized Public Opinion + Opposition)

vs. (Ministerialists + Ministerial Lobby + Mass Public Opinion)
= FAILURE

v) (Specialized Public Opinion + Ministerial Lobby)

vs. (Opposition + Ministerialists + Mass Public Opinion) = FAILURE

The Study of British Pressure Groups

The application of the concept of pressure group for study has been a narrow one. The range of groups in the British political process that have been studied is a small one centered upon national interest groups and also national attitude groups.¹ Morris Davis complains that the way the field of pressure groups had been defined omitted business corporations from study while including relatively insignificant groups such as the Union of Welsh People in Dispersion.²

Other areas of pressure group activity, in which research should be possible, need study. The emphasis in the study of British politics has been in recent years more upon the study of local politics than was the case previously. But so far this shift of emphasis has not been as clear in the field of pressure group studies. So far no

1. Castles also complains that there has been an overemphasis upon interest groups. See Castles, op. cit., pp. 6-7 and Chapter 7.

2. Morris Davis, "Some Neglected Aspects of British Pressure Groups," Mid West Journal of Political Science, Vol. vii, No. 1, 1963, p. 42.

Business and industry have been studied through trade associations but there are occasions when they will come openly into the political arena seeking to influence public decision-making and decision-makers. For example, Shell was opposed to the 1965 Finance Bill (The Times, 14 May, 1965). It is probable, although it would be difficult to document in detail, that industrial corporations have direct contacts with Ministries which are concerned with their area of interest, and industrial corporations campaign, on occasion, to persuade the public and hence decision-makers. For example, the Anti Nationalization campaigns, see Richard Rose, Influencing Voters, London: Faber, 1967, Chapter 6; and H.H. Wilson, "Techniques of Pressure — Anti Nationalization Propaganda in Britain," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 15, 1951, pp. 225-242.

study of the role or activities of local pressure groups (or national pressure groups) in local politics has appeared. While the role of pressure groups in local politics is an important area for study, another area is that of local/national pressure groups in national politics and particularly in relation to the national decision-making process. Many of this latter type of group are local/national 'protest pressure groups' which are opposed to a decision which is about to be taken or which has been taken. The case study which follows in part two will be concerned with this type of group amongst others. In so doing, the case study will be exploring a relatively uncharted area of British Politics. In addition to looking at local/national groups it will be looking at a protest pressure group, which also have not been examined in any great detail. The role of public authorities, whether local or national, as pressure groups is also an area that has been neglected. This area forms part of the focus of this study. It is one of the contentions in this thesis that while interest groups may be the most numerous and most influential of pressure groups, it is necessary to widen the focus of pressure group studies if a true picture of the multiplicity of the groups and channels used by different pressure groups in Britain is to be acquired.

In the literature of British Pressure Groups, there are two very general approaches to the study of pressure groups: group based studies and issue based or decision-making studies. The group based

approach has as its focus a particular group,¹ such as the British Medical Association. The approach looks at the group's actions in the political process. At the most sophisticated level this will involve an examination of the group's behaviour and the factors that influence and determine that behaviour, and perhaps also the factors that make for its success or failure as a pressure group over time. This approach will normally look at a particular group over a period of time and in relation to a number of decisions rather than in relation to a particular decision. The group-based approach is more concerned, therefore, with long term environmental factors, both external and internal.² But there is no reason why this approach should not be applied to the study of pressure groups over a short period of time.

On the other hand, the issue-based or decision-making approach to the study of pressure groups is not essentially concerned with pressure groups, but with an examination of the political process as it operated in the particular case examined. The actions of pressure groups are only one of the elements which are being studied. In this approach therefore, pressure groups can be seen against the actions

1. The group could be an interested group of individuals, who might work through formal groups. In this case, the informal grouping could be more crucial. See H.H. Wilson, Pressure Group: The Campaign for Commercial Television, London: Secker and Warburg, 1961.

2. These are factors internal and external to the pressure group, such as its organization or the nature of the decision-making process in the area of concern to it, which will affect its behaviour. These will be examined more fully in the next chapter.

and activities of other elements of the political process, such as Ministries, the political parties, the media, or Parliament as a body. It is possible to see the interactions between the pressure groups, other competing groups and the groups such as Parliament which they all seek to influence and which form part of the environment in which the pressure group is operating. The approach allows the political scientist to see the whole equation of groups and elements of the political process involved in the particular case or decision.

At its most elementary level the group-based approach is purely descriptive.¹ But implicit in these studies is the notion that groups seek channels of influence and have targets through which they hope to achieve their objectives. These studies raise the question of why certain groups use particular channels in some ways, other groups use these same channels in different ways, while still other groups use different channels altogether. What, therefore, are the factors that will determine why certain channels are used by the group in the way that they are? Further, one can ask what effect changes in these factors have upon the channels the groups will use. What determines the techniques that will be used for exerting influence of the

1. The earliest studies of British Pressure Groups were of this nature. These outlined the membership, organization and activities of the pressure group, together with the way in which they used the channels of influence. These studies, though, made no attempt to study the dynamics of pressure group activity. See Allen Potter, "The Equal Pay Campaign Committee: A case study of a pressure group." Political Studies, Vol. 5, 1957, pp. 49-64; and S.E. Finer, "Transport Interests and the Roads Lobby," Political Quarterly, Vol. 29, 1958, pp. 47-58.

groups? Essentially these break down into two major points: the first is the effects of the rest of the political system upon the operation of the groups and the methods they use for exerting influence for the achievement of their goals, and the second is the role of strategy and tactics in the group's behaviour in the political system. This second factor can be seen as the group's leaders relating all the environmental factors to the group's operation so that it can achieve its goals by the most effective use of its resources.

The group-based approach as developed by Eckstein or Wootton shows the importance of studying the relationship of the pressure group and its behaviour.¹ Eckstein in his study of the British Medical Association deals with the effects of certain elements of the social structure, culture, and the political structure upon the behaviour of pressure groups in general and the British Medical Association in particular. He sees these as having a dynamic relationship in that these will have an effect on the channels used by pressure groups and upon political attitudes. "There is then a twofold relation between the channels of pressure group activity on the one hand and structure of government, pattern of policy and political attitudes on the other: structure, policy and attitudes decide the channels pressure groups will use predominantly to exert influence, and the nature of these channels in turn affects pressure group organization and tactics."²

1. Eckstein, op. cit. Graham Wootton, The Politics of Influence: British Ex-Servicemen, Cabinet Decisions and Cultural Change 1917-1957. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.

2. Eckstein, op. cit., p. 22.

Wootton also stresses the need for examination of the pressure group in relation to its environment although his emphasis is upon the cultural aspect. "The other prerequisite is that the conduct of such groups shall be analysed against the background of historical circumstances and of the 'political culture'. (Those values, beliefs and emotions that bear upon political conduct.) To relate pressure group activities to the culture is of crucial importance."¹ While Eckstein only looks at strategy and tactics implicitly, Wootton examines these explicitly and is thereby able to show how changes in the political culture and policy towards the ex-servicemen has changed the strategy and tactics of the groups and also their relationships with the different channels of influence. He charts, for instance, the gradual shift towards the Ministry as public policy developed in this area.

Both these studies are carried out using data drawn from a period of time which does not relate to any particular case, although they both include particular cases of action by these groups. If a group is going to be studied over a short period of time or in relation to a particular issue or at a specific point in time, it is still important that the study should relate the group's actions to its environment, and relate the environmental factors to the group's use of targets and channels of influence. The factors that affect pressure group activities are: the structure of decision-making that they are seeking to influence, the activities of government, the attitudes towards group behaviour and

1. Wootton, op. cit., p. viii.

internal factors in the group such as its membership and organization and its attitudes towards pressure group activity.

By itself the group-based approach is not entirely satisfactory for studying short term pressure group actions such as the protest against the airport at Stansted. In the short term the interactions between different groups and actors involved in the process of public decision-making over the issue are crucial factors which affect the behaviour of the pressure group. In the short term the actual process of public decision-making as it operates in the particular case is important. The decision-making or issue-based approach enables the political scientist to see the interplay of groups at the different points in the decision-making process, as well as the interplay between the context in which an issue is developing or legislation is being undertaken and the behaviour of the pressure groups concerned.¹

1. This approach has generally been concerned with subjects that were matters for legislation, and many of the studies relate to the legislative process, both in the stages of preparation and passage through Parliament. This approach has been applied to a particular piece of legislation: or a particular issue that is the subject of attempts at legislation over a period of time. For example, Malcolm Joel Barnett, The Politics of Legislation: The Rent Act 1957, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969; Frank Smallwood, Greater London: The Politics of Metropolitan Reform, Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1965; J.J. Richardson, "The Making of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1956: A case study of the policy process in Britain," Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 20, 1966-67, pp. 350-374; and Christoph, op. cit.

There are also attempts to apply this approach to subjects which are not matters for legislation or involving the legislative process, but these studies tend to have other concerns than the groups involved. For example, a study of policy formation in relation to an issue, in this case science and technology, is Norman J. Vig, Science and Technology in British Politics, London: Pergamon Press, 1968. The

When the subject is one of protest, the context in which the protest action is being taken is one of interplay between different actors in the political system and it is the configuration of these relationships that will in the short run determine the success or failure of the pressure groups. The subject of the case study is one of protest. The approach needed in this study is a combination of the two approaches discussed above. Thus the interplay between the local pressure groups, which are the pressure groups under study here, and other political actors in the controversy can be seen in the context in which decision-making is being undertaken throughout the controversy. But in addition, as our major concern is with studying the local pressure groups involved, the factors which are examined in the group-based approach, such as the internal organization of the pressure group and their strategy and tactics, also need examination.

attempt by the Ministry of Transport to execute motorway policy in relation to a section of the M4 is seen in Roy Gregory, "The Minister's Line : or, the M4 comes to Berkshire." Public Administration, Vol. XLV, 1967, (ii) pp. 113-128 and (iii) pp. 269-286.

CHAPTER TWO

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PRESSURE GROUP BEHAVIOUR

In the previous chapter a brief examination of the approaches to the study of pressure groups was undertaken. It is now necessary to put forward a framework for the analysis of pressure group behaviour, which with adaptations for this particular controversy, will serve as the framework for our analysis of the behaviour of the local pressure groups involved in the Stansted Airport Controversy. It is essential to realize that the process of pressure group activity is a dynamic one. In examining this process, we need to look at the strategy and tactics that the group develops in relation to its environment.

Table two sets out in a diagrammatic form a chart of the flow and interactions of the different factors which affect the behaviour of a pressure group or a series of pressure groups in the political system. Pressure group operations can be seen as comprising five basic stages. First, there are inputs of environmental factors, against which the pressure group's leaders are going to determine its strategy and tactics of influence, aimed at achieving its goals. The process of deciding the strategy and tactics comprises the second stage. It is followed by the third stage, the actual actions with regard to the channels of influence and the targets. The fourth stage is the outputs

TABLE TWO : PRESSURE GROUP FRAMEWORK

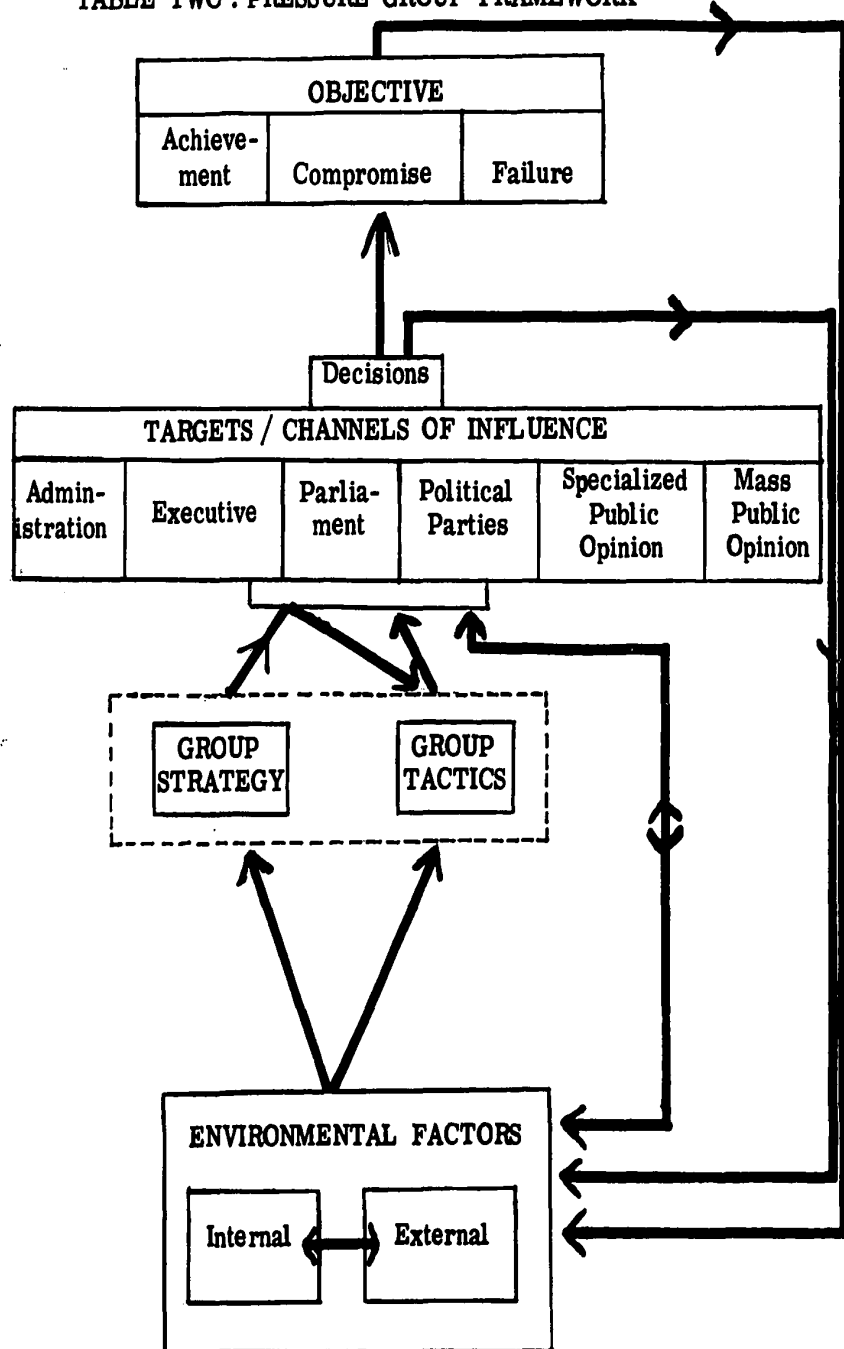


TABLE TWO : PRESSURE GROUP FRAMEWORK (Cont'd)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORSa) External

- 1) decision-making process
- 2) activities of Government
- 3) attitudes to group activity
- 4) attitudes to the subject
- 5) other groups
- 6) climate of opinion
- 7) behaviour of other pressure groups
- 8) decision-making process in operation
(especially decisions emerging)
- 9) internal situation of channel of influence
- 10) reaction of decision-makers to pressure

b) Internal

- 1) membership
- 2) aims and objectives
- 3) organizational factors
- 4) attitudes of the group
- 5) political resources

GROUP STRATEGYGROUP TACTICSTARGETS and CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE

- a) Mass Public Opinion
- b) Specialized Public Opinion
- c) Parliament (or the Council)
- d) The Executive (or Council Committees)
- e) The Administration (or Local Government Administration)
- f) Political Parties

DECISIONS

- a) SUCCESS
- b) COMPROMISE
- c) FAILURE

FEEDBACK

To environment (with short term or long term effects).

of the decision-making process which may result in the group's succeeding, compromising, or failing to achieve its goals. This will have, in the fifth stage, a feedback effect on the pressure group which will then have to make more decisions in the light of the new situation.

This is only an outline of the process in a very simple form: it is far more complicated in practice because there are feedbacks at all stages of the flow, some of which will have a greater and others a lesser influence upon the strategic and tactical decisions of the pressure group leaders who are involved. Nor is the process a simple movement from stage to stage because in some cases there will be continual interaction between environmental factors, the targets and channels of influence and the group's tactics before any decisions will emerge from these channels. On the other hand, the group may be able to obtain decisions quickly from the channels, but not be satisfied with them and therefore change its tactics to meet the new situation.

Two major points arise out of the examination of the approaches to the study of British pressure groups. These are the effects of the environment and the need to examine the strategy and tactics of influence of the group as a dynamic process which would vary and change with the changing internal and external environment of the pressure group. These two factors have been incorporated into the framework, which is presented here and which will serve as the framework for this examination of the local pressure groups involved

in the Stansted Airport Controversy.¹ In a study, such as the present one, where the length of the controversy in which the pressure groups are involved is a relatively short one, there is no advantage in dividing the environmental factors into long term and short term component factors.

The environmental factors, which are essentially the inputs into pressure group activity, can be divided into external and internal environmental factors. Some of the external environmental factors, which can be related to the political culture of the country, tend to be constant throughout a particular controversy, while others are constantly changing in response to and as part of pressure group activity. The external environmental factors, which are normally constant and which are of concern here, are first attitudes to group activity in the political system. The notions of the legitimacy of pressure group activity will affect all the participants in the political system. It will also affect the propensity of people to form groups and the way they will be received in their activities, once they are formed. These attitudes will determine the extent to which people are prepared to form groups to protest or to fight government decisions that they feel unjust.

1. In many cases, and especially where a pressure group is studied over a long period of time, the environment (both external and internal) can be seen as consisting of long term and short term factors. The long term factors will tend to be constant and only change in substance over a period of years. The short term factors will be constantly changing as the pressure group operates in the political arena and thereby evokes responses from other political actors.

Second, public attitudes to the subject of concern to the group will also affect its behaviour and affect its chances of success in pursuing its aims.

Third are the activities of government, including attitudes about what the government should be doing, which will also affect the behaviour of the groups. If government is deeply involved in activity in a particular area, such as the health service, then the pressure groups involved in this area will tend to use the administration as the means for gaining its objectives. The fact that government is involved in a particular area will also affect the aims and objectives of the group. This is because if the framework of public policy has already been set, as it would have been when there is a high level of government involvement, the demands of the group are likely to be related to the detailed implementation of that policy framework. On the other hand, if the framework of public policy has still to be determined in a particular area, the aims of the groups, in that area, are likely to be of a more fundamental nature and to be demands that cannot be settled purely in the administrative sphere. They are likely to be decisions that will involve political decisions about priorities or legislation. But once the group achieves its goals in these areas, or if the government becomes involved in that area, the long term environment will change and the pattern of group aims, strategy and tactics will have to change. For example, after the Second World War the National Farmers Union (NFU) changed its strategy of influ-

ence from one of trying to gain its objectives through Parliament to one of using its newly established position and close relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture as the means of achieving its objectives.¹

Also involved here are the public's attitudes to what government activity should be in the particular area of concern to the group. Favourable public attitudes towards the adoption of the framework that the group is seeking will relieve the pressure group of the need to educate the public and decision-makers about the necessity of their objectives. On the other hand, if there is ignorance or hostility, which often go together, there will be the necessity for the group to inform and educate the public and the decision-makers. These two different situations would require the adoption of different strategies and tactics on the part of the group concerned.

Fourth, there is the nature of the government structure in general and the process of decision-making in the particular area of concern to the group. The government structure will be determined in part by the constitutional structure and the related acts setting up governmental institutions. This provides the framework within which decision-making takes place. The process of decision-making will also be determined by the legal framework relating to such matters as public inquiries, and whom the decision-maker is legally bound to consult before he makes the decisions, and the procedure that he has to follow to place

1. Peter Self and Herbert Storing, The State and The Farmer. London: Allen and Unwin, 1962, Chapter 2.

those decisions in a legally authorized form. This process will affect the way that groups will seek to make their influence felt. The formal framework within which decisions are made will therefore give or deny to pressure groups the opportunities for pressure and affect the techniques that they will use.

Other external environmental factors tend to change as the controversy develops with actions, responses and counter-responses from the pressure groups involved and other actors in the political system. Of major importance here is the climate of opinion about the issue. This involves the recent decisions relating to the particular issue or the factors making a decision on that issue necessary, as well as the degree of general public awareness and interest in the issue. The climate of opinion is dynamic because it will develop, as the media and public attention is concentrated upon the issue and decision-making bodies move towards decision and action. This factor may have a favourable or unfavourable effect upon the pressure group's chances of success.

Important to the group is the behaviour of other pressure groups in relation to the issue and the group's demands. A group that can gain the support of other groups interested in the issue is in a position to strengthen its influence on the decision-makers. Indeed, in a particular issue, a group may seek as part of its tactics to gain the support of or to form a united front with other pressure groups. Also of concern to the group is the activity of groups which are opposed to its

stance on the issue. The group may be in a situation in which it has to compete with its opponents and convince decision-makers of the 'justice' of its cause over that of its opponents. Therefore of vital concern, in deciding tactics, are the resources, political or otherwise, that other pressure groups can bring to play on the issue.

Crucial to its success is the relationship of the channels of influence to the issue that is of concern to the group. Two points are relevant here. First is the internal situation inside the channel that the group is seeking to influence. For instance if Parliament is the channel which is the target of the pressure group, and on this particular issue the House is evenly divided along party lines, there will be little chance that any approach to individual MPs will be of much use to the group. A party political issue will not leave the group much leeway for influence unless it is involved on the government side of the controversy, and even then, it will be small. The second point here is the reaction of the decision-makers to pressure exerted upon them. Their reaction forms part of the external environment of the pressure group because, as the issue develops, the group has to make new tactical decisions to seek to achieve its objectives. As decision-makers react, the group may well act not just by using new techniques and weapons but by changing its tactical objectives. For instance, rebuttal may be followed by a campaign for a Royal Commission to inquire into the issue. A protest pressure group might take a similar sort of decision.

Another external environmental factor is the decision-making process in operation. This refers to the decisions that emerge from the decision-making process as well as the way in which these decisions are made. In some cases, the important factor will be the actual decisions, while at other times it will be the process of decision-making such as the combination of groups inside the decision-making process that will be important to the behaviour and success of the pressure group. The decisions emerging and the process of decision-making on particular occasions may provoke strategic or tactical decisions by the pressure group in response to the situation it then faced, or it may do nothing.

The other group of environmental factors are those which are internal to the pressure group. These will affect the ability of the pressure group to undertake pressure group activity, and will also affect its behaviour as a pressure group in the political system. Again, there is in many of the internal factors a constant element that will only change over a long period of time, and there are elements which change regularly as the pressure group undertakes pressure group activity. This point tends to be of very little importance in the case of protest pressure groups which are formed to protest a particular or pending decision or action. The immediate and changing factors are those of most importance in the case of these groups.

The ability of the group to exert influence in the political system is determined at the most basic level by the size or quality of its membership. The ability of the group to organize a high percentage of its potential membership means that it is a force that has to be reckoned with, particularly if the area concerned is one of crucial importance to the government. A high percentage membership also means that the group is less likely to be in a position where there are strong rivals competing for its membership. When there are no rivals or only very weak ones, the group is able to devote its attention to fulfilling its goals in the political system and does not have to worry whether a rival group is gaining membership. The lack of rivals also means that decision-makers are confronted with one powerful organization and there is no potential for decision-makers to avoid the group by using its rivals and playing them against this group. Monopoly position strengthens the hand of the pressure group's leaders. A monopoly position is the case for many interest groups in Britain but not the case with attitude groups or protest pressure groups. Even with these groups the larger the membership the stronger is the bargaining position of the group, particularly if it can show itself representative of the opinions of a large number of people.

More important on many occasions is the quality of the membership. If the group's membership is drawn from the 'establishment' of people who are engaged in politics and pressure group activities, then the group can open up the channels through which its influence can be

felt. But related here is the fact that if drawn from this part of society, its membership will be at home in the world of pressure groups and pressure politics, with experience of exerting pressure and influence. It will also have no prejudice against pressure group activity, which is sometimes a problem with pressure groups that have had no connections with the pressure group world. The actual quality of a particular membership is really a factor that has to be brought to bear in particular situations. The pressure group may not have members or leaders with the needed connections at a particular time, although their membership may be drawn from the 'establishment' or 'elite' groups.

The pressure group's aims and objectives will determine to a large extent the targets and channels of influence which the pressure group will use. If its aim is related to a subject that is already an area of government involvement, then its attention is likely to be directed towards the Ministry concerned. If the area is already the subject of legislation before Parliament, then Members of Parliament or particular members of the House may be subject to its attention. If the group is protesting a decision, then a series of channels may be used to exert pressure upon the decision-maker. A group, of course, may use a series of channels to gain its objectives.

The organizational factors will affect the behaviour of the pressure group and its ability to carry out pressure group activity successfully. The organizational factors can be divided into five

component factors, each of which can affect the ability of the pressure group to function in the political system. The first organizational factor is the structure of the group. This includes such aspects as the division between the centre of the organization and its membership and the arrangements it has, such as permanent staff and offices for the permanent continuous conduct of its affairs. An organizational structure which did not allow for contact between the centre and their members could lead to the breakdown of communication inside the organization, while no permanent central staff might mean that the group would only function on a limited irregular basis. Second is its internal decision-making processes, the complexity or simplicity of which will allow it to take or not to take rapid decisions when they are needed. Third, the quality, ability and contacts of its leadership will determine the effectiveness with which it undertakes pressure group activity. Fourth, it needs financial resources to be able to maintain its organization and to mount its activities of political pressure. The availability of financial resources will also affect the techniques used to undertake pressure group activity. Fifth, its ability to act will also be affected by the information, specialized knowledge or skill that it possesses in its area of concern. Sixth, its ability to act will be affected crucially by its mobilization potential because to act successfully as a pressure group it needs to mobilize its resources and its membership behind its pressure group efforts.

The behaviour of the pressure group will also be affected by the attitudes of the group including those of its leadership and membership. Important here are the attitudes of the group to the subject of concern because these will determine the nature of its demands. Second are its attitudes to decision-making. These will determine its attitudes towards decision-making and decision-makers in their area of concern, which will affect the relationship that the pressure group may have with the different channels of influence. Third are its attitudes to pressure group activity by itself. For instance they may consider that some forms of pressure group activity are not legitimate, or the group may develop attitudes that will predispose it to certain channels of influence rather than other channels that might in a particular case yield the results they desire.

Another important internal environmental factor are the political resources of the group. These include internal factors that are helpful to the group in its political operation, and would involve such things as friendships among members and key decision-makers, or special skills and experience of particular members, or the fact that key people in the political system live in the area where the members of the pressure group are in contact with them for reasons completely unrelated to the particular group or issue.

The environmental factors will have an effect upon the way the pressure group operates in the political system because they will determine the strategy and tactics which the pressure group will adopt.

The Strategy of the group refers to decisions relating to how the pressure group intends to achieve its long term and overall objectives. For example, a decision to concentrate its activities upon securing legislation through pressure upon MPs, or a similar type of decision to seek its objectives through building up a relationship with the relevant Government department would constitute a strategic decision. The Tactics of the group relate its specific resources and attitudes to its environment and the channel or combination of channels of influence that it will use. For instance, tactical decisions include when to exert pressure upon a particular Minister, or when to act in the House of Commons, or when to promote a public campaign and how. Decisions about the particular weapons to be used at the time by the group also enter into the question of tactics. The Strategy and Tactics of the group emerges from decisions taken explicitly or even implicitly inside the pressure group. Here is involved not only the objective factors of the environment such as membership, or finance, but also the images of the leaders of the pressure group of the environment and how their group can best achieve its objectives in the political arena.

All the factors outlined so far in this section are involved in the approach to the targets or channels of influence through which the group hopes to achieve its objectives. In the British political system at the national level six targets of influence or pressure can be identified. They are: the Administration, the Executive, Parliament,

the Political Parties, specialized Public Opinion and mass Public Opinion.¹ The Administration is the Civil Service sections of the Ministries that are responsible for the area that the group is interested in. The Executive refers to either the Minister as an individual Minister or to the Government, through the Cabinet. Parliament is the House of Commons and the House of Lords, as individual members or within the Parliamentary Parties relating to parliamentary concerns. The Political Party refers to the party as a whole and includes the party outside parliament. Specialized public opinion is concerned mainly with experts within a particular field but it could include people considered to have special positions which meant that their individual opinions would be listened to with greater weight than most by decision-makers. Finally there is the mass public.

A detailed exposition of the use of these channels is not necessary at this stage. It is necessary to note that pressure groups will use combinations of targets as a means of achieving their goals and that there is a constant feedback process between these channels of influence and the environment and the group's tactical decisions. Decisions will emerge from these channels because some of them are directly decision-makers such as the Administration. In terms

1. The basic pattern can be followed at the local government level, inserting 'Council' for 'Parliament', 'Council Committees' for 'the Executive' and 'Local Government Administration' for 'the Administration'. But the situation will depend partly upon whether the Council concerned is one in which there is party politics.

of the group's objectives these decisions could be in one of three forms. It could mean success, or it might be a compromise solution, or it could be complete failure. Finally the resulting situation has a feedback into the environment of the pressure group which will be either of a long term or a short term nature and which will affect the strategy and tactics of the group. The conception underlying the framework is that the pressure group world and the activities in it are dynamic with constant interaction and reaction between the different factors and actors involved.

PART TWO :
THE CASE STUDY
THE STANSTED AIRPORT CONTROVERSY

**A study of the local pressure groups that sought and
managed to prevent the siting of the Third London
Airport at Stansted in North West Essex.**

CHAPTER THREE

THE STANSTED AIRPORT CONTROVERSY —

THE FRAMEWORK APPLIED

This case study¹ will use the framework which was outlined in the previous chapter, with adaptations for this case, to examine the behaviour of the local pressure groups which sought to prevent and succeeded in preventing the development of Stansted Airport into the Third London Airport (Stansted), and to examine the factors which contributed to their successful pressure activity.

The study will be concerned with three sets of local pressure groups. First, there is the North West and East Herts Preservation Association (NWEHHPA) and its town, village and parish groups, which constitutes a Local/National protest pressure group. Second, there are the County Councils of Essex and of Hertfordshire. Third, there are the local Councils which were located in the vicinity of the airport site. The data on these will be based upon the following

1. Terms used in the case study:

- i) Local pressure groups refer only to all the local pressure groups which are the subject of this study.
- ii) Local Groups refer to all other local groups, such as the Parish Councils, which may be pressure groups, but which are not the subject of this study.
- iii) The Councils refer to all the councils under study including the County Councils and the local Councils.
- iv) The local Councils refer to all the District or lower tier councils such as Dunmow RDC.

Councils: in Essex, Dunmow RDC, Saffron Walden RDC, Epping and Ongar RDC, Saffron Walden BC, Harlow UDC, and Epping UDC, and in Hertfordshire, Braughing RDC, Bishop's Stortford UDC, and Sawbridgeworth UDC. All the Councils constitute Local/National Public Authority Pressure Groups.

Their behaviour will be examined through all the phases of the controversy. The Stansted Airport Controversy began in March 1964 when the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Third London Airport was published, and ended, for our purposes, with the publication by the Commission on the Third London Airport in March 1969 of a short list of sites to be investigated. This list did not include Stansted, although Nuthampstead, some ten miles to the north west of Stansted, was included. The controversy itself falls into four periods, in which there were changes in the behaviour of the local pressure groups. The first phase from March 1964 until February 1966 sees the development of the opposition, the local debate over the site, the preparation and presentation of objections to this site by the local pressure groups to the public inquiry. This was followed until May 1967 by a phase of little activity and 'wait and see' while the Government assessed the results of the public inquiry and made its decision. The third phase began with the Government decision, and the publication of the Government White Paper and the Inspector's Report and ended with the decision of the Government in February 1968 to hold a new inquiry. The activity in this phase centered upon the

campaign of the local pressure groups involving Parliament and public opinion to gain a new inquiry and to prevent the Government from proceeding to implement its decision. The fourth phase, which followed the Government decision for a new inquiry, ended with the Roskill Commission's short list of sites in March 1969, and is concerned with the setting up of the Roskill Commission and that Commission's initial work.

The structure of the case study is based upon the framework already outlined, which had been adapted to meet the needs of this case. The framework is a complex one in which there is considerable overlap of different factors, which means that there will be, of necessity, a certain degree of overlap and repetition of empirical data in this study.

Chapters Four and Five will be concerned with examining the external environment of the local pressure groups, including both long term and short term factors together because of the relatively short length of the controversy. Chapter Four will be concerned with some factors of a long term nature which are of underlying importance to the case because they are part of the British political system. The bulk of that chapter will be concerned with examining the Decision-Making Process in Operation, focussing upon the decisions made by the Government as a whole and its component parts and the arguments they were using to support their position, and their actions to carry out their decisions. Chapter Five will look at the attitudes and

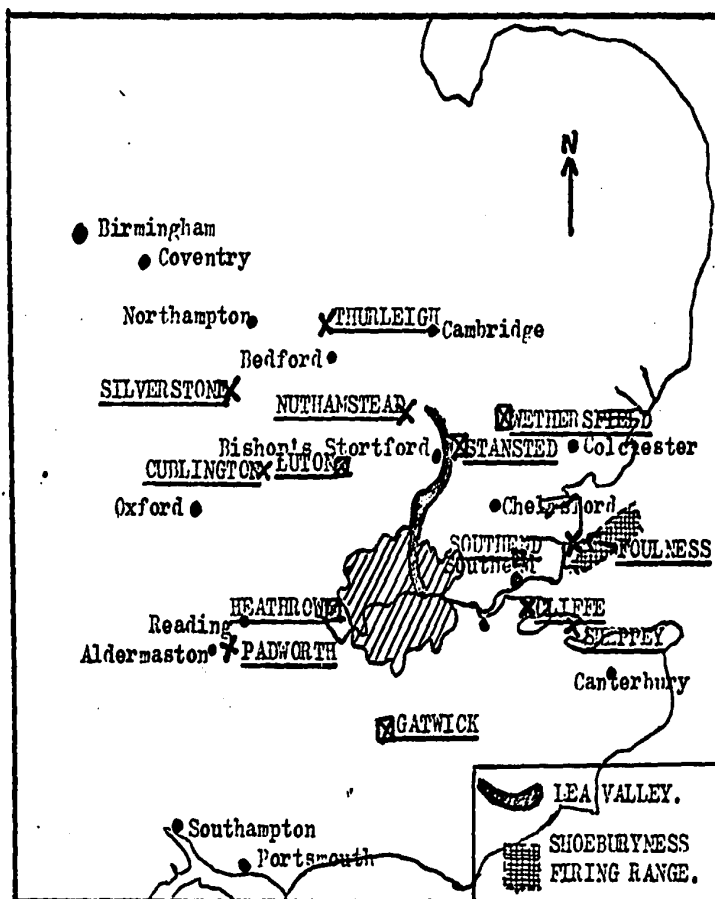
activities of other groups involved in the controversy and will show the considerable degree of local and national opposition to Stansted that was expressed. In addition, the climate of opinion will be briefly looked at, including the attitudes of the press.

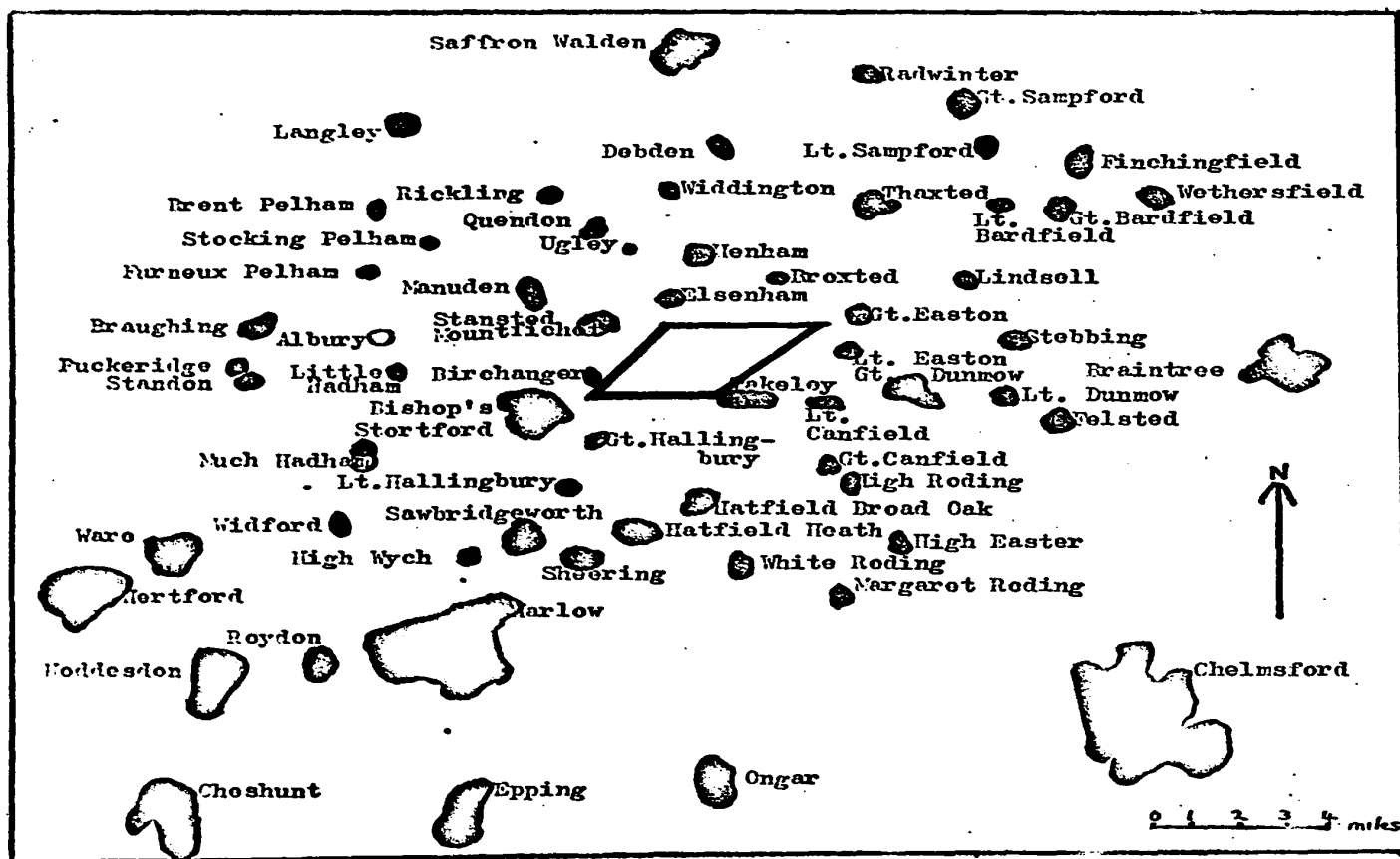
Chapter Six will examine the internal environmental factors of the local pressure groups, which again because of the short length of this controversy, will include in the long term (constant) and short term (changing) factors together.

Chapters Seven and Eight will examine pressure group activity by the local pressure groups through the different stages of the controversy. This will include an examination of the strategy and tactics of the local pressure groups, including reference to how their leaders saw the position with regard to exerting influence and pressure and the means they saw as the best for achieving their objectives. These Chapters will also examine at the same time the means and weapons they used to exert influence and pressure upon the different channels of influence which they used. In addition, the external environmental factors of the internal situation of the channel of influence and the reaction of decision-makers and the channels of influence to pressure and influence will be examined in the course of these chapters. At the same time, note will be made of the feedbacks involved in the operation of pressure groups in this case. Chapter Seven will cover the period up to the Government decision in May 1967 while Chapter Eight will cover the period after the decision until

March 1969, when the Roskill Commission's short list of sites was published.

Chapter Nine will bring the different aspects of the Stansted Controversy together in an examination of the success/fail factors in this case.





MAP TWO: The Stansted District (NE Hertfordshire and NW Essex) showing proposed location of London Airport (Stansted) and surrounding Towns and Villages.

CHAPTER FOUR

THIRD LONDON AIRPORT AT STANSTED?

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS :

(1) THE GOVERNMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

This chapter and the following one will examine most of the external environment of the local pressure groups involved in the Stansted Airport controversy. From Chapter Two, it can be seen that the external environment of pressure groups can be divided into two groups of factors: the long term and short term external environmental factors. But this will depend upon the exact focus of the particular pressure group study. In this case, given the relatively short length of time of the controversy, most of the factors which make up the long term and short term external environmental factors are intertwined in such a way as to make it difficult to categorize them. The long term factors of the external environment, in a case such as this, do not normally vary for the duration of the controversy and are not normally the decisive factors as far as the pressure groups are concerned. It is the short term factors that are more likely to be decisive for them. Therefore, it is not necessary in this case, and there will be no attempt to separate the factors of the external environment into the component long term and short term factors.

The factors which make up the external environment of pressure groups were discussed in Chapter Two. Some of these factors of a long term nature were constant throughout the controversy and are only of underlying importance to this case because they are factors of the type which help to shape British politics in a more general way. These are the attitudes towards group activity in the political system, and the attitudes displayed by participants in the political system towards the functions and activities of government. Another constant factor is the governmental structure and the structure and legal requirements of the decision-making process. These provide the broad outer framework within which pressure group activity took place in this case.

Other external factors were not constant throughout the controversy, and it is the way in which these developed and changed throughout the controversy that helped to shape the external environment of the local pressure groups in this case. Two of these factors perhaps provide the predominant elements of the external environment of the local pressure groups. These are the Decision-Making Process in operation and the behaviour and attitudes displayed by other pressure groups, national and local, in the controversy. The term Decision-Making Process in operation refers in this case to the decisions emerging at different times from the different parts of the political decision-making apparatus. In this context, the reference is to the Government and its departments as actors in the controversy. Here

it is not just the decisions that are included, but also the arguments and means used by the Government to put its case.¹ It is also inclusive of the way decisions seemed to have been formed. The second predominant element in this case was the behaviour and attitudes of other pressure groups for and against the position of the local pressure groups. This refers to their actions for and against Stansted and the arguments they used to support their position in the controversy. The activities and attitudes of the other pressure groups are also a component part of other factors of the external environment. The Climate of Opinion refers to all opinions about the issue which are displayed by the mass and specialized public opinion. This includes the arguments and attitudes in and of the media. The other factor is the attitudes displayed in the political system towards the particular subject of concern to the local pressure groups.

This chapter will therefore begin the examination of the external environment. This chapter will be concerned with a brief examination of constant long term factors as they relate to this case. Then the focus of attention will move to the factors of the external environment which relate to the Decision-Making Process in operation, including the Government as an actor in the controversy.

1. The Internal Situation inside the Executive and Administrative parts of government, while mentioned here, is discussed together with the reactions of decision-makers to pressure in Chapters Seven and Eight when the Channels of Influence are considered.

LONG TERM (CONSTANT) ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

In Britain, as was discussed in Chapter One, pressure group action for desired political ends is a recognized and legitimate means of political action. There was therefore nothing in British political attitudes which would inhibit the local protest movement from forming itself into a pressure group to promote its opposition to the proposals before a public inquiry and also to oppose the Stansted decision of the Government. But equally it is recognized that it is the function of the Government to provide, or establish the machinery to provide, transport facilities which would include the provision of airports. Therefore, it was accepted that the Government's attempt to place the airport at Stansted was a legitimate function of Government.

The Decision-Making Process

Before examining the decision-making process as it actually operated in this case, note will be made of the possible approaches to making a decision of this nature and of methods for the implementation of the decision. First, it should be realized that, in Britain, policy on airports and aviation is the responsibility of the Central Government. At the beginning of this case, this responsibility was in the hands of the Ministry of Aviation, but after April 1st, 1966, this was changed. As a result of these changes under the 1965 British Airports Act, the British Airports Authority was set up to operate the international airports which had been administered by the Ministry of

Aviation. These airports were London (Heathrow), London (Gatwick) and Prestwick. In addition the British Airports Authority was also to administer and operate the airport at Stansted. The British Airports Authority was only to administer and operate these airports: policy about expansion of these sites and policy over new sites was retained in the hands of the Government. This responsibility, on the break up of the Ministry of Aviation, was given to the Board of Trade. The sections in the former Ministry of Aviation, concerned with airports, were attached to the Board of Trade, and did not fall within the major areas of concern of this department. The result of these changes was that the President of the Board of Trade became the Minister responsible for taking the decisions on the new airport, though ultimately he needed Cabinet approval. These changes did not affect the basic decision-making structure for the Stansted decision, except to put the actual decision in the hands of a Minister with another title.

A decision to site a major international airport in any location would involve and affect the responsibilities of other Departments and other public bodies. The Ministries of Housing and Local Government, Transport, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Food would be involved. The Local Authorities, particularly the county councils as planning authorities, would be concerned. In addition so would a number of other public bodies such as British Railways and the Economic Plan-

ning Councils and Economic Planning Boards.¹ The decision is therefore one that cannot be taken in isolation by the Ministry of Aviation, or the Board of Trade.

In addition to requiring agreement from other public bodies, the Government Department concerned likes to obtain the support of the locality affected and needs to show in the open the reasons for the decision. Consultations could be undertaken with local bodies as a means of explaining decisions and listening to objections and complaints from those affected by the location of the airport in a particular place. A local public inquiry into the objections is a means of undertaking this, though it seems that there is no statutory requirement for a public inquiry. If a public inquiry is to be held, an inspector will be appointed to conduct the inquiry and to report on the local objections. With a non-statutory public inquiry, there is no obligation on the Minister to follow the recommendations of the inspector.

Once the local consultations and/or the public inquiry have been conducted, the Government is in a position to make a final decision. A number of courses of action are open to the Government to implement its decision. As a result of the British Airports Act, the British Airports Authority would be responsible for developing the site if Stan-

1. The Regional Economic Planning Councils and Economic Planning Boards were not set up until 1965, but a decision to locate an international airport within their area would directly involve their responsibilities in the economic planning sphere. This is why they should be added to the list of concerned public bodies.

sted were chosen. In this case permission to build the airport could be gained by the British Airports Authority going to the County Planning Committee and asking for planning permission in the normal way; more likely this procedure would be avoided by action through Parliament. If this course of action were chosen, a number of alternatives would be open. First, a Special Development Order could be introduced into Parliament, which would require a positive vote of both Houses of Parliament, and would not be subject to the provisions of the Parliament Acts which restrict the veto or delaying power of the House of Lords. The Government could proceed by means of Act of Parliament. In the case of sites other than Stansted, the Government could develop the site directly, delegate the responsibility to the British Airports Authority, or delegate the responsibility to some other body. The choices taken at the different stages of the decision-making process will affect the strategy and tactics of the local pressure groups, as will the exact nature of each of the decisions emerging from the decision-making process. Attention will now be turned to examining the decisions that emerged from the decision-making process throughout the controversy.

SHORT TERM (CHANGING) ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Background on Stansted Airport

In the early 1960's the Ministry of Aviation was operating two airports for London. London (Heathrow), in a heavily populated area in West London, had become the major international airport for the

London area, while London (Gatwick), in Surrey, with one runway, was serving as the second airport for London. At this time extra capacity could be gained by the expansion of both airports, and this expansion would be able to cope with the anticipated growth in air traffic, both passenger and freight, into the early 1970's. But beyond that date, there would be a need for a new airport because there was a limit to the space available for new runways or extended ones at both Heathrow and Gatwick. The situation, which faced the Ministry in the early 1960's, was therefore to decide when a new airport would be needed and the requirements for that airport.

Among the many airports in the London area was one at Stansted in Essex. Originally Stansted had been built and operated by the United States Air Force during the Second World War. The Stansted site, covering some 800 acres, had a main runway of 10,000 feet with plenty of space available for extensions. Since the Americans had vacated the base in the early 1950's, Stansted had been used by the RAF, used for training airport fire fighters, and as an alternate for Heathrow and Gatwick, as well as an airport for the training of pilots of the nationalized airlines (BOAC and BEA). In one of its reports in the 1960-61 session the House of Commons Estimates Committee had questioned whether the large expenditure of money on Stansted was justified, and it suggested that the future of the Stansted site should be examined by the Ministry of Aviation. It was this report amongst other factors that prompted the Minister

of Aviation to appoint the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Third London Airport.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN OPERATION AND GOVERNMENT
ACTIONS : 1964-1966

The Inter-Departmental Committee and its Report

The Stansted controversy moved into the public arena with the publication of the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee in March 1964.¹

The Committee had been appointed by the Government in November 1961 to consider the requirements for a third London airport, including its timing and location. The Committee had been composed of fifteen members under the chairmanship of Mr. G. V. Hole, an Under Secretary in the Aerodromes (General) Division of the Ministry of Aviation. With the exception of two of its members, the committee's members were directly concerned with Aviation.² Before the Committee reported in June 1963, it met eleven times, with the detailed information being assembled on subjects such as air traffic routing and road and rail access to the sites under consideration, by a working

1. Ministry of Aviation, Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Third London Airport. C.A.P. 199. London: HMSO, 1964. (Hereafter cited as C.A.P. 199.)

2. The exact breakdown of the membership was:- Ministry of Aviation 7, Airlines 4, Air Ministry 1, Air Traffic Services 2, Ministry of Housing and Local Government 1, Ministry of Transport 1. See C.A.P. 199, p. vii.

party of the Committee. This latter group was attended at certain meetings by representatives of British Railways and the Ministry of Transport as advisers, while the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food were asked for their views on 'certain matters'.¹ The whole Committee visited Stansted, while other promising sites were visited by their advisers.

The Committee determined that, upon the basis of the forecasts of traffic growth available to it, a new airport would be needed in the early seventies. More precisely it reckoned that a new runway would be needed in 1972, and that if this were built at Gatwick, a completely new airport with one runway would then be needed in 1973, and that by 1980 a further runway would then also be needed. It also considered that it was essential that these latter two runways should be at the same airport for the convenience of air traffic control, the airlines and passengers. Therefore, it made its objective "to find a site where two parallel main runways could be built sufficiently far apart to ensure that each could be operated independently, thereby obtaining a potential sustainable capacity of 64 hourly movements" and in addition "the site must also, of course, have room for the maintenance bases, car parks and other terminal facilities needed by this volume of traffic."²

1. C.A.P. 199, p. 1.

2. Ibid., pp. 2-4.

The Committee also noted that the airlines demand for a London Airport, ready access from London, a minimum of delays to flights from air traffic control or other reasons, and good communications between London's airports. In addition they noted that BOAC and BEA are strongly opposed to operating out of more than one London airport; in fact, they wish to operate all their services out of Heathrow.¹

"British Airlines agree, therefore, that Heathrow should ideally remain capable of serving routes in all the directions in which they run services, and that Gatwick and the third airport between them should be able to serve all routes operated by foreign airlines, who would be displaced from Heathrow. They would thus like to see both Heathrow and the third airport capable of serving for as long as possible routes in every direction, that is, both airports omnidirectional."²

The Committee set out eleven requirements for the site of the new London airport. First, it had to provide an efficient air traffic route structure which would allow the new airport to function to its full capacity without hindering the other two airports, and it should not be placed where, because of air traffic routing difficulties, it could serve only a small proportion of London's air traffic. The Airport must have, or be able to have, speedy and convenient facilities for direct travel to and from central London. The land should be such that the airport could be built at a reasonable cost. The

1. Ibid., p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

approach areas must be free from obstacles to flight and have only sparse population while the airport should interfere as little as possible with agriculture, local industry and existing amenities in the area, and there should be noise disturbance to the least number of people possible. But on the other hand, it should be as close as possible to population centres large enough to supply the necessary labour. Also the site should be one where the weather would hinder or prevent operations on the smallest number of occasions, and if possible at different times from Heathrow and Gatwick. There should also be as little as possible interference with the airspace needed for other purposes, such as military flying. And finally, it should be sited so as it would not prevent the provision of further airports to serve London.¹

As a result of its study of the problems of air traffic routing problems, the Committee concluded "that, if Heathrow was to have the ability to serve routes in all directions at a rate of 64 movements an hour, a second airport of similar capacity, even a sectional one, could not be sited within 50 statute miles of central London, and in terms of conventional means of surface transport would be much too far out for a 'London' airport."² So they ended up by looking for a site within easy reach of central London which would allow the new airport and Heathrow to be omnidirectional for as long as possible.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

Also they said that the Ministry of Transport had pointed out that the surface traffic generated by a twin runway airport would not justify a special new road or new rail track, so that it would have to fit into the existing or projected road and rail patterns.¹

Most possible sites were easily dismissed by the Committee. To the west of Heathrow, the sites were too far out and "there is little chance that any site will be within an hour of London by road."² Again the sites east of London on the Thames estuary were dismissed for similar reasons. It concluded: "Thus, although the Thames estuary in general might at first sight seem a likely area for an airport because of the stretches of flat, desolate marshland along its shores, . . . to the west of Southend and the Isle of Sheppey . . . it would be impossible to build a large airport that would not conflict with Heathrow; and outside this line no sites could be found within an hour's journey of central London."³

Finally the Committee chose Stansted. For them, Stansted had a number of advantages.⁴ First, it was a site already in use as an airport with a 10,000 foot runway on a NE/SW alignment that could be extended. Second, the provision of a parallel runway up to 12,000 feet was practicable. Third, on meteorological grounds it

1. Ibid., p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Ibid., p. 13.

4. Ibid., pp. 13-16.

was good, and only slightly worse than Heathrow, with the advantage that it is often usable when Heathrow is not. Fourth, an air route structure could be devised to allow Heathrow and Stansted to operate to their full runway capacity, although with some restriction on the North East and East routes from Heathrow eventually. Fifth, it would be within a convenient distance of Bishop's Stortford which has a population of over 18,000 lying in an area offering scope for large scale population growth. Sixth, it would be within the access requirement with the construction of the M.11. and other road improvements near the centre of London. "In fact it appears to be the only one that will meet the criterion of one hour's travelling time from the West End."¹ In addition it is close to the main Eastern Region railway line into London through Bishop's Stortford.

They noted that the area was one of good agricultural land but this was dismissed by the Committee. "The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, have pointed out that the development of an airport here, together with the associated industry and housing, would mean a loss of good agricultural land; but against this may be set the economic value of the new airport on promoting industry and maintaining London's position as one of the chief air traffic centres of the world."² Indeed, the Committee envisaged that full scale development

1. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Ibid.

would follow. "An enlarged airport at Stansted would inevitably stimulate residential development in the area. The airport itself might ultimately employ some 7,000 — 10,000 people; if allowance is made for the families and for employment created indirectly by the airport, a population growth of between 25,000 and 50,000 could well be expected. In addition to this, the airport, together with the new motorway, would greatly enhance Stansted's attractiveness as an area for the development of commerce and industry and would make the locality a strong candidate for the planned increase in population on a larger scale. This in turn would greatly benefit the airport."¹ Therefore the Committee concluded that it is their "belief that Stansted is the best of the sites that we have considered and, in view of the time scale for its development, the only one with clear prospects of making a good airport for London. We are accordingly unanimous in recommending Stansted as the site for London's third airport."²

The Committee's report was endorsed by the Government through the then Minister of Aviation, Mr. Julian Amery, in a foreword to the published version of the report, which seemed to imply that Stansted had already been decided upon as the site. "It concludes that Stansted Airport should be selected and designated as London's third airport. The Government believe that this is the right choice."³ The Govern-

1. Ibid., p. 15.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

3. Ibid., p. iii.

ment published the report to allow discussion. "It is, however, only proper that all those likely to be affected should be given the opportunity to consider and discuss the reasons for the choice of Stansted."¹ "Every effort will be made, in conjunction with the national and local authorities responsible, to ensure that the airport and its surface communications are developed to the best advantage of the travelling public. In particular, we shall consider closely the implications of this decision for communications between Stansted and central London and between the three London Airports. We shall also seek in accordance with the recommendations of the Wilson Committee on the Problem of Noise to reduce the impact of noise on residential areas near the airport," and Mr. Amery concludes, "I hope that there will be full public discussion of this report and I shall welcome constructive suggestions for making Stansted an efficient and attractive airport."²

Local Consultations

As part of the process began by the publication of the Inter-Departmental Committee report, Government Departments, during the summer and autumn of 1964 conducted discussions with the local authorities of the area. These were conducted under the auspices of the Essex County Council who are the planning authority for the area concerned. These consultations consisted of meetings, of representa-

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

tives of the local authorities called by the County Planning Committee, at which the Ministry of Aviation representatives outlined their thinking upon the site and were questioned by the representatives of the local councils.

The first of these meetings, which were supposed to be confidential, was held in Harlow in the middle of July 1964. At this meeting, the Ministry of Aviation representatives outlined their proposals for the development of the site on the basis of two new parallel East-West runways, $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles long, with takeoff and landing paths over Bishop's Stortford and Great Dunmow, and an extension of the present NE/SW runway to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles length. But at this stage the Ministry was very tentative in its proposals. It promised to look into the noise implications of the runway proposals, and promised that Government finance would be available for public services such as transport and housing. But there was no discussion of whether a Stansted New Town or an expanded Harlow would be used to house airport workers.¹ But altogether very little information was available to the Councils, except that they were told that for an area of 19 square miles around the proposed airport, planning applications would be referred by the Essex County Planning Committee to the Ministry of Aviation to

1. Both the possibility of a Stansted New Town and the expansion of Harlow were local issues at the time. The possibility of a New Town at Stansted Mountfitchet had been mooted in March 1964 in a Government report on the South East. At that time this report had raised more local concern than the report on the airport. From this point in time the issues of airport development and the Stansted New Town were linked.

avoid development that would conflict with the airport.¹

In spite of the fact that the discussions and information at the meeting were supposed to be confidential, the Chairman of Dunmow Rural District Council, Mr. Horace Juniper, decided to disclose the full contents of this meeting to his council at its meeting held shortly afterwards, on the grounds that the public had a right to know what was going on. Through the local press reports of this council meeting, the local public learned something of what was being planned. It was at this time that the protest movement really began to organize with the formation of the Takeley Anti-Airport Committee and NWEHHA.

By the time of the next meeting in December 1964, the NWEHHA and its groups had become organized and the local Councils were showing increased alarm at the Ministry proposals. Also at the December meeting, the Ministry changed its proposals for the layout of the site. At the meeting they announced that they had decided to drop the southern of the East/West runways and that they would probably drop the northern one as well.² Instead they proposed to construct the airport on the basis of two parallel NE/SW runways, which meant that the present NE/SW runway would be lengthened and a new parallel runway would be constructed 6,000 feet to its side. In addition land to the east side of the airport would be taken over for the possible

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 24 July, 1964; Harlow Citizen, 17 July, 1964.

2. This was finally dropped in June 1965. See Braintree and Witham Times, 25 June, 1965.

construction at a later date of a third smaller runway parallel to the two main runways. On the basis of the two major runways the Ministry reckoned that a standard busy rate (SBR) of 64 hourly movements could be gained while the construction of the third runway would give the airport an SBR of 80 hourly movements which would be needed in the 1980's. A major advantage of the new layout, the Ministry argued, would be that there would be less disturbance through noise, as the take off and landing paths would be over Broxted and Thaxted in the NE and Hatfield Heath and Great and Little Hallingbury in the SW, rather than over Bishop's Stortford and Great Dunmow. Also the Ministry saw advantages from the fact that the new proposals would use up less land than the original July proposals.¹

A number of other points were raised at this meeting. One of these points was the question of alternative sites, in answer to which the Ministry said that it had no short list of alternatives, and that Foulness was impossible because there were vital defence installations in that area.² On the question of transport connections, the Ministry representatives said that the M.11. would be completed in the early 1970's, and it was holding talks with the Transport Ministry on the rail links.³ Finally, the Ministry reaffirmed that no final

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 18 December, 1964; Harlow Citizen, 18 December, 1964.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 18 December, 1964.

3. Braintree and Witham Times, 18 December, 1964. The whole question of these defence installations was a mystery at this time.

decision would be taken until after the public inquiry and consideration of the Inspector's Report. This inquiry was not expected until late in 1965.¹

This last point, that no final decision would be taken until after the public inquiry and full consideration of the Inspector's Report, is important to an understanding of the later behaviour of the local pressure groups after May 1967. It was the position adopted by the Ministry and the Government as a whole in all the discussions in the period before the public inquiry, and the change of Government from Conservative to Labour in October 1964 made no difference to this point. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Aviation in reply to Sir Derek Walker Smith² stressed that although there was a strong technical case for the choice of Stansted, it was "only right that a proposal of this nature, which will affect the lives of many people, shall be put to the test of a public inquiry. A final decision will only be made by the Government in the light of the outcome of this inquiry."³ Sir Alec Douglas Home, then the Prime Minister, made this point in a letter to Mr. R.A. Butler, a senior Cabinet Minister and MP for Saffron Walden⁴: "The Government has in no way made a final decision

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 18 December, 1964.

2. Sir Derek Walker Smith is Conservative MP for the East Hertfordshire constituency which includes such places as Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth.

3. Harlow Citizen, 18 September, 1964.

4. The Saffron Walden Constituency includes the areas of Saffron Walden RDC, Saffron Walden Borough Council, and Dunmow RDC. The proposed development of the airport would take place within this constituency.

and cannot until it has heard the result of the public inquiry. It is important that the inquiry should be thorough and genuine. The door is not closed to suggestions for alternative solutions. This is a long term matter that can only be decided after thorough public investigation."¹ Mr. Butler, who had been advising his constituents to present the strongest possible case to the public inquiry,² also followed this line. In a letter to Sir Roger Hawkey, one of the joint chairmen of NWEHPA, he outlined the position as he saw it: "So far an expert inter-departmental Committee has recommended Stansted Airport as the Third London Airport on technical grounds. No account has yet been taken of human considerations, the living conditions, the amenities and the agricultural character of the area involved What has got to be done now, and done by your committee, is to put the case as I have described above to the Public Enquiry which is promised for next year. I pledge myself that this Enquiry shall be genuine and that the findings should be respected I have the Prime Minister's assurance that no final decision has been made, and will not be made until after the public enquiry next year."³ Mr. Roy Jenkins, who became Minister of Aviation in the Labour Government, also maintained this position when he spoke at a Labour Party meeting at Stansted during the Saffron Walden by-election. "I am in no way going to

1. Harlow Citizen, 18 September, 1964.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 7 August, 1964.

3. NWEHPA, The Stansted Black Book. Dunmow, Essex: NWEHPA, 1967, Appendix B.

prejudge the question of Stansted Airport before all the facts have been put out before the public inquiry."¹ As late as November 1965, Lord Shackleton, answering a question for the Government in the Lords, again stressed that "a final Government decision on the proposed development of Stansted will be taken only in the light of the outcome of the public inquiry, and we shall certainly seek to take into account all relevant factors in reaching that decision."²

The major factor, as far as government action is concerned, for the local pressure groups in this period was that officially the Government had not yet made up its mind about the site, and would wait for the results of the public inquiry before doing so. Preparation for the public inquiry was therefore the key factor in the external environment at this stage, because the public inquiry appeared to be a means through which the local pressure groups could influence the Government decision on Stansted, as it had promised to respect the findings of the public inquiry.

Preparations for the Public Inquiry

The local pressure groups, as will be shown in detail in the later chapters, sought the widest possible terms of reference for the public inquiry. In a letter to Brigadier T.J.F. Collins, Chairman of the Essex County Council Planning Committee, Mr. Roy Jenkins replied

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 12 March, 1965.

2. Hansard (Lords), Vol. 270, 17 November, 1965, Cols: 65-66.

to the points which had been raised by a local delegation, led by Brigadier Collins, on the subject of the public inquiry. The Minister was not prepared to allow the public inquiry to examine the question of the necessity for a new airport, nor the question of the timing of the need. These, he felt, were national policy issues which were inappropriate for consideration by a local public inquiry.

The local delegation had also raised the possibility that the Minister and the Government would ignore the Inspector's Report or consideration of alternative sites. To this the Minister said: "I assure you that this will not occur. If the outcome of the inquiry is that another site is to be preferred to Stansted, this will be followed up and it will not be ruled out for lack of time to study and survey the site."¹ Finally, he came to consider one of the major worries of the local pressure groups. This was that the Government had already made up its mind in spite of the fact that it was going to hold a public inquiry. "The deputation told me that a refusal to meet their request (for a wide inquiry) would tend to give the impression that the Government's mind was made up, that the inquiry would only be a formality and that the development of Stansted would be pressed through regardless of the outcome. I can give you the firmest possible assurance on this. My mind is not closed to proposals for alternative sites. It is for this reason that the terms of reference of the inquiry, unlike those of the public inquiry of 1954 into

1. Harlow Citizen, 1 October, 1965.

the proposed development of Gatwick Airport, allow objectors to propose alternatives. My only concern is that the site eventually developed as the Third London Airport, whether Stansted or elsewhere, should be the best and most suitable site that can be found."¹

On the 14th of October 1965, the Minister of Housing and Local Government appointed Mr. G.D. Blake to conduct a public inquiry into the local objections to the development of Stansted as the third airport for London. In addition, Mr. J.W.S. Brancker, an aviation consultant, was appointed to assist as technical assessor. The purpose of the inquiry was "to hear and report local objections relating to the suitability of the choice of Stansted for an airport and the effect of the proposed development on local interests. It will be open to local objectors to suggest modifications to the outline scheme of development or to propose alternative sites, but not to question the need to provide a third major airport to serve London."²

The Ministry of Aviation and the Stansted Public Inquiry :
December 1965 - February 1966

The public inquiry, before the Government Inspector Mr. G.D. Blake, was held in the Essex County Offices during the period of December 1965 to February 1966. In this, the Ministry of Aviation

1. Ibid.

2. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Report of the Inquiry into Local Objections to the proposed development of land at Stansted as the Third London Airport. London: HMSO, 1967, p. 1. Hereafter this will be cited as Stansted Public Inquiry Report.

was responsible for presenting the proposals on Stansted and the case for Stansted as the third airport for London. The Ministry case was presented by Sir Milner Holland Q.C., who had been briefed by the Ministry of Aviation. He called thirteen witnesses to testify on various aspects of the scheme and on issues that would be raised in the inquiry. Some of the Ministry witnesses had been members of the Inter-Departmental Committee. These included Mr. G.V. Hole, who had been Chairman of the Committee, Captain V.A.M. Hunt, who was Director of Control (Plans) of the National Air Traffic Control Service, Sir John Briscoe, Director of Aerodromes (Technical) in the Ministry of Aviation and Mr. H.A. Shaw who was Deputy Controller of Defence Lands Service in the Ministry of Defence. Other Ministry witnesses were experts concerned with areas such as noise, road and rail links to and from Stansted, while yet other witnesses were concerned with transport links to other possible sites, particularly the Thames Estuary sites.

A detailed recital of the Ministry case presented in the public inquiry is not necessary because much of their case repeats the position of the Inter-Departmental Committee. But nonetheless certain aspects of their case as presented in the public inquiry are of particular importance as part of the external environment of the local pressure groups, because these aspects pointed to the weaknesses and inconsistencies of the Ministry position which the local pressure groups were to attack. Using experts, the Ministry of Aviation sought to

uphold the case for Stansted and to show that other alternatives would not have the advantages that Stansted had. Opening the case for the Ministry, Sir Milner Holland was anxious to stress that the Government still had not made up its mind and that no decision had been taken or would be taken until the results of the public inquiry were known. Only then would a final decision be made, and then only with full weight being given to the report of the Inspector.¹

Sir Milner Holland rested the case for Stansted upon the positive and negative requirements for the site of the new airport, which he outlined in his opening address to the public inquiry. The positive requirements of the site were essential, and if the site did not meet these there was no point in considering it for development as London's new airport. First, the site had to be compatible with the existing airports of Heathrow and Gatwick, so that all three airports could operate fully together. The second requirement was safety. There had to be safety between all three airports. The third requirement was that the site should be suitable from the air traffic routing point of view. Fourth, it had to be accessible to London in order to make it acceptable to the airlines and the travelling passengers. Here he put forward the criterion of one hour's travelling time from central London. Fifth, the site must be suitable for the construction of an

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 December, 1965. In spite of the endorsement given by Mr. Amery on behalf of the Government, the proposal for Stansted was still essentially a Ministry proposal rather than a Government proposal especially if the assurances of Ministers were to mean anything.

airport that was capable of handling a SBR of 64 hourly movements. For this, the airport would need two parallel runways of 12,000 feet set 6,000 feet apart. He considered Stansted suitable on these grounds and said, "we know of no other site which does not fall foul of the requirements."¹

He also felt that Stansted was the most suitable site upon the grounds of the negative requirements. These requirements were as follows. First, the nuisance by noise must be reasonable. The changes made by the Ministry in the runway alignment proposals had considerably reduced the problem of noise, he argued. Second, the scheme must not conflict with regional planning requirements. Third, there must not be unreasonable conflict with interests such as agriculture. Fourth, there must not be unreasonable conflict with national interests such as defence and scientific research. Under this heading he included such things as the USAF base at Wethersfield and the Ministry of Defence Firing Range at Shoeburyness. Fifth, there must not be unreasonable interference with private flying and gliding. Finally, the cost of the construction of the airport should be considered.²

The testimony of the Ministry witnesses was designed to back up this basic case which had been outlined by Sir Milner Holland. Certain points arise out of this testimony which are important to the local pressure groups. The result of these points was to make the

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 December, 1965.

2. Ibid.

case for Stansted suspect on some grounds. The most important example of this is the testimony of Mr. E. Kerr of the Ministry of Transport, who was in charge of planning the M.11. He said that the M.11, through the Roding Valley, would be completed by 1972. He estimated the road travel as follows: the journey from Stansted to Kings Cross (34 miles) would be covered in 55 to 70 minutes, from Stansted to Liverpool Street (33 miles) in 50 to 60 minutes, and from Stansted to Grosvenor Square (36 miles) in 65 to 80 minutes and to Victoria in about 100 minutes. The next day he tried to change his testimony because he said the figures were not the correct ones. He was refused permission to do this, and counsel for the local pressure groups sought unsuccessfully to close the inquiry at this stage because these figures did not meet the requirements for access which the Ministry had laid down.¹

The testimony of Mr. Hole revealed that the inter-departmental committee had not considered the value of agricultural land that would be lost or the value of its production. Although they knew that it was classified by the Ministry of Agriculture as top quality A.1 land, they did not think it necessary to undertake research into this aspect.² His testimony and that of Captain Hunt revealed confusion over the position of the Wethersfield air base. It emerged that there had not been much consideration of the position of the Wethersfield Air Base before the

1. Ibid., 17 December, 1965.

2. The Times, 16 December, 1965.

public inquiry. Captain Hunt felt that they would be able to operate together for a start, but when Stansted became fully operational, Wethersfield would have to be closed. Mr. Hole revealed that it was only during the inquiry that the United States authorities at the base had been approached upon this question of closure, and there was confusion over which authorities had been consulted and which should be consulted about the closure of the base.¹

In addition to these inconsistencies in the Ministry case, many issues were left untouched by their case and evidence. For instance, no evidence was presented to support their claim that the development of Stansted did not conflict with the requirements of regional planning, and no planning expert gave evidence for the Ministry.²

The public inquiry was important to later developments of the controversy because the Ministry case, which essentially was the one adopted by the Government in deciding to proceed with the development of Stansted in May 1967, appeared to be inadequately based and did not appear completely watertight. The inadequacy and inconsistencies of the Ministry case had an important effect upon the Inspector and his Technical Assessor, who felt unable to recommend Stansted in their report which was to figure prominently in the later stages of the controversy after May 1967. The report of the Inspector was first to

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 and 17 December, 1965.

2. It was rumoured, but not substantiated, that the Ministry were unable to find a planning expert who would testify for them in support of Stansted. Interviews.

affect the Government's behaviour, since it was presented to the Government ten months before it was published, and then later to affect the local pressure groups.

THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN OPERATION AND GOVERNMENT
ACTIONS : 1966-1967

The Inspector's Report on the Public Inquiry

The report of the Government Inspector on the local objections to the Stansted site had a profound effect upon the behaviour of many of the groups involved in the controversy. The Government received the report in June 1966 and considered it until it was published in May 1967, together with their own White Paper on the Third London Airport. The contents of the report remained unknown to the general public and the local pressure groups until it was published, so that it was not until May 1967 that it was to form part of the external environment of the local pressure groups. But before that it affected Government behaviour in the period to May 1967, which in turn was to affect the external environment of the local pressure groups.

The Inspector's Report covers the general objections to Stansted, while Mr. Brancker dealt with the aviation aspects in more detail in his comments. Overall both were not satisfied with the choice of Stansted at that stage. "It would," writes the Inspector, "be a calamity for the neighbourhood if a major airport were placed at Stansted. Such a decision could only be justified by national necessity. Necessity

was not proved by evidence at this inquiry."¹ He continues his appraisal of the proposal by saying that it succeeds on the viability of air traffic control, but there are strong arguments against it on grounds of town and country planning, access to and from London, noise, the character of the neighbourhood, and the loss of good agricultural land.²

Overall, Mr. Brancker was also unhappy about the position: "I am extremely hesitant to suggest anything which may lead to delay, but much of the evidence submitted seemed to me rather superficial and I would be very much happier to see a general examination in more depth before any firm decision is taken."³ Mr. Blake recommended that "a review of the whole question should be undertaken by a committee equally interested in traffic in the air, traffic on the ground, regional planning and national planning. The review should cover military as well as civil aviation."⁴

They felt, therefore, that the problem needed to be examined again, because it seemed clear that all the problems and alternatives had not been sufficiently considered. From the point of view of air traffic control problems, Stansted was considered to be a satisfactory site. But Mr. Brancker emphasized that he thought that, although

1. Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., p. 4.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

4. Ibid., p. 8.

the most attractive site, it was not the only possible site.¹ He found that on the problem of air traffic control "the Ministry of Aviation and the traffic control experts have adopted a very conservative attitude and have insisted on generous separation of traffic streams" Although he found no fault with this, he considered that "there was a tendency to treat the existing Airways and sequencing areas as virtually immutable, whereas to obtain the best results a complete revision may be necessary."²

A major factor that prohibited serious consideration of other possible sites in the Thames estuary area was the defence firing range at Shoeburyness. The location of this firing range brought forth comments from both Mr. Blake and Mr. Brancker. They had been presented with evidence that the firing range could not be removed from Shoeburyness. But Mr. Blake comments: "I have, of course, to accept that evidence although the main thing about Shoeburyness is that it is there. It is difficult to think of a less suitable location for an artillery firing range than the Thames estuary."³ Mr. Brancker considered that its removal together with the removal of the prohibited flying areas that go with it would be a considerable advantage, particularly as it would allow other sites to be more seriously considered.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 55.

2. Ibid., p. 54.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

4. Ibid., p. 55.

It was upon aspects other than air traffic that the Stansted site came under the most attack. Mr. Blake considered that no evidence had been presented upon the nature, location and extent of new development including the replanning of the roads system, and he concluded on this aspect that "all the evidence submitted to me was that development of this kind in this area would be bad regional planning."¹ In addition, there would be the loss of considerable amount of high grade agricultural land. He was worried about the access problem. The evidence given by Mr. Kerr did not, in the Inspector's opinion, stand up very well to cross examination, and he felt that the railway links to Stansted would need much more study and a complete reorganization of the railway line between Bishop's Stortford and London, if the airport traffic was to be carried.²

Government Consideration of the Report

The Government received the report from the Inspector in June 1966. In view of his findings, the Government was presented with a difficult political situation. The Government could, of course, merely reject the findings and continue to proceed to develop Stansted Airport without further consideration. This was a course that would have presented it with considerable opposition. The Government could override the Inspector because this was not a statutory public inquiry and the Inspector was merely reporting his findings to the Government.

1. Ibid., p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

The second course open to the Government was to set up a new committee, as recommended in the report, to consider the full implications of the choice of the site for the new airport. Or they could conduct their own re-examination of the problem, which is, in fact, the course that the Government followed, though this was not to emerge until after the decision for Stansted had been announced. Until the report itself and the White Paper were published in May 1967 the Government undertook a review of the decision in private. The people involved were drawn from Government departments, including some of the same people who were originally involved.¹ There was no attempt to call for outside evidence from the local pressure groups or to consult the South East Economic Planning Council, because, the Government argued, under the 'Chalk Pit' rules they could not do so without re-opening the Inquiry.² But at the same time, in spite of that, new

1. This internal review is shrouded in secrecy. The Government claim that it was in accordance with the recommendation of the Inspector in that it covered physical and economic planning problems as well as aviation ones, and according to Mr. Jay, "the individuals concerned in this inquiry were, with one exception, quite different from those who conducted the previous inquiry, and therefore, brought fresh minds to the problem." Hansard (Commons), Vol. 749, 29 June, 1967, col. 793. But the Government never published the list of names of the individuals and posts of those involved, when challenged by the local pressure groups to do so, in spite of the fact that those of the Inter-Departmental Committee were made public in their report. The failure of the Government to clarify the position on this increased the suspicions of the local pressure groups of Government decision-making in this case.

2. The 'Chalk Pit' rules are a set of rules governing the collection of new evidence by Government departments following statutory public inquiries which requires them to allow all objectors to question or present objections on the new evidence usually by re-opening the inquiry.

evidence was submitted to the internal review from the Government Departments concerned with the problem.

This review culminated in the Government White Paper on the Third London Airport. This secret review did not affect the local groups during this period because they did not know that it was going on. But the Inspector's Report, the Government treatment of it and the Government White Paper had a decisive effect upon the attitudes and hence the actions of all the local groups and upon a great many other groups. Indeed, these are some of the crucial factors that turned this from being a chiefly local issue into a national political issue, as the decision-making procedures and methods were considered wrong and inadequate, especially by the local pressure groups who considered that the Government, by adopting this procedure, had broken all its assurances.

**THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN OPERATION AND GOVERNMENT
ACTIONS :- MAY 1967 TO FEBRUARY 1968**

The announcement by the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Douglas Jay, in the House of Commons of the Government's decision to develop the Stansted site as the Third London Airport, together with the publication of the White Paper on the Third London Airport and the Report of the Government's Inspector provides the watershed in the Stansted controversy. From this point onwards, the issue is no longer a local issue concerning the building of an airport at Stansted, but is a national issue which is also concerned with the methods

and ways in which Stansted was chosen as the site for the development of the airport as well as the actual suitability of Stansted as the choice for the airport. It also became an issue of national airport policy because on the more technical aspects the emphasis was to swing away from consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of Stansted as the choice to a consideration of the needs of a national airports' policy in which the third London airport and the Stansted choice were integral issues. For the opponents of the Stansted scheme, there was now the need to convert the issue from a purely local one into an issue which would affect the political viability of the Government's choice. The Government was now in a position in which it had to defend a clearly stated position. The Government had now to win support for its decision so that it could implement that decision. The problem for the Government as it emerged was to find a scheme which maintained their decision but which also was possible to implement. The major part of the problem for the Government, therefore, was to try to mobilize public and particularly political support for the decision and to try to mollify the opposition so as to render it negligible, in the face of a determined campaign against their decision and for a new inquiry by the local pressure groups.

The controversy, particularly in this period, can be seen as operating at two levels: the political and the technical. Two debates can be seen as going on during this period. There was a political debate about the policies relating to Stansted and the way in which

decisions had been taken and were being taken. Intertwined and interlocked into this was the debate on the technical level of whether Stansted and the Government's airport policy was the right one. Technical experts were being used to consider these issues, and to advise the participants on these issues, and to develop a critique on the Government's policy.

This section of the chapter is concerned with the Government's actions and decisions in the case in the period following Mr. Jay's announcement until Mr. Crosland's announcement of the new inquiry in February 1968. Three areas will be examined here. First, the White Paper will be examined as this provides the major reference point for much of the activity of this period. Second, the political level of the debate from the Government's angle will be examined, and finally the Government's technical case will be examined as it changed after the White Paper.

The White Paper and the Government Decision for Stansted

The White Paper¹ sets out the results of the Government review of the problem, its decision for choosing Stansted and rejecting the alternatives. It also attempts a rebuttal of the objections of the Inspector to Stansted and of the other points that he had raised. And finally it outlines how the Government intended to proceed with implementing the decision. This document, together with the Inspector's

1. The Third London Airport. Cmnd.3259, London: HMSO, 1967. (Hereafter cited as Cmnd.3259.)

Report and Ministerial attempts at justification of the decision became the focus for the attention of the local pressure groups both on a political and a technical level.

The Government did not consider that the Inspector had made a definite statement either for or against Stansted but only that he had called for a new inquiry, which the Government argued, it had conducted into the proposals.¹ This re-examination in their view had thoroughly looked at the proposal and the alternative sites and they still concluded that Stansted was the best of the available sites.

In the course of this inquiry there had been a re-examination of the question of the timing and the need for the new airport and it was concluded that "there are no grounds for expecting that the need for a new airport to serve London can be postponed beyond the middle years of the next decade, and believes that in practice the requirement for the airport may come rather earlier than this."² The exact timing would depend upon whether a new runway would be built at Gatwick. But upon this point the White Paper was unclear.³ Discussing the possibility of transfers of flights from Heathrow to Gatwick and the timing of the need for the new airport, the Government said: "Taking

1. Ibid., p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

3. This point was taken up by Mr. Jay when challenged in the House of Commons on the matter: it seems that a second runway would be built by 1971-2. Hansard (Commons) Vol. 749, 29 June, 1967, Col. 788.

these considerations into account the Government believes that transfers of traffic from Heathrow to Gatwick might put off the need for a third London airport by two to four years, depending upon the availability of a second runway at Gatwick."¹ In addition, the Government argued that the need for a new London airport could not be avoided by development of regional airports because most of Britain's air traffic, both passenger and freight, was going through London and it was here that the expansion of airport facilities was needed. They saw the problem of the regions as being one of developing air services rather than one of airports which were considered adequate for current needs.

Therefore the Government envisaged that "to provide the greatest flexibility for the organization of London's air traffic as far ahead as possible, the third London Airport should be multi-purpose (i.e., it should cater for long, medium and short haul services, both passenger and freight)" and it considered that "a multi-purpose airport also needs to be able to cater efficiently for traffic to all points of the compass, or as near that ideal as practicable."² Significantly, the Government seemed now to be thinking in terms of a major third London Airport which was different from the proposals envisaged in the earlier phases of the controversy. "Nevertheless, the great difficulties experienced in providing and agreeing a site [sic] for a third London airport make it desirable that this third airport should ultimately be capable of develop-

1. Cmnd.3259, op. cit., p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

ment to largest practicable capacity — namely to that of two pairs of parallel runways."¹ It seemed that there had been a change in the conception of the role of the new third London Airport from the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee and the public inquiry proposals. But at that stage, it was not too clear and it only seemed to be hinted at that the new airport might become London's No. 1 Airport in the future. The local pressure groups were concerned over this point, as a four-runway airport was considerably different from the two-runway airport of the public inquiry proposals.

The Government case for Stansted was that it was on balance the most suitable site. "Stansted has indisputable advantages over the main alternatives on the scores of air traffic control, surface access, and cost; it is acceptable on grounds of noise; its terrain is good for airport development. Its acknowledged drawbacks are that the development would entail the loss of good agricultural land and disadvantages in local and regional planning. After careful consideration of all the possibilities, however, the Government believes that there is no alternative site for a third London airport that is superior to Stansted in its implications for agriculture and planning and is at the same time both technically suitable and capable of development at an acceptable cost."²

A number of points need to be made on the Government case for Stansted itself. Its comments upon the terrain contains perhaps

1. Ibid., p. 12.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

one of the most significant sentences of the whole White Paper: "The terrain at Stansted is suitable for the development of a large airport with two pairs of parallel runways and is free of abnormal cost factors."¹ This was a statement that was bound to cause concern to the local pressure groups because again it hints at developments well beyond those which were the subject of the public inquiry. On the question of noise, the Government, while arguing that it would not be as bad as the Inspector had suggested, acknowledged that the problem would be worse than at Sheppey and they estimated that the number of people subjected to high noise exposure would be one twentieth that at Heathrow.² It was estimated that road access, via M.11., would, at off peak times, take about 70 minutes and that rail access, via the circuitous route of King's Cross and Brixton, would be about an hour to Victoria.³

The Government produced only very vague figures about the cost of the scheme at Stansted. They put the basic cost of the new airport, wherever sited, at £45 million. At Stansted £4 million could be deducted for the existing runway and £6 million could be added for road and rail access, making a total cost for the airport at Stansted of £47 million. They also indicated but did not include any estimate, that there might be some cost in replacing facilities

1. Ibid., p. 18.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

at the Wethersfield air base.¹

Most alternative sites were dismissed by the Government, but some consideration was given to Sheppey in the White Paper. Sheppey was considered by the Government as the most practicable alternative to Stansted but still was not suitable. They thought it might be satisfactory on many grounds. It would not interfere with military flying, and there was enough land for the construction of an airport with three or four well spaced parallel runways, though because of the marshy ground it might be more expensive to construct. The noise problem would be small and the land involved was not of high agricultural quality. The loss of rural amenity would be less than at many alternative sites, and there was no objection to population expansion in the area. But these advantages were outweighed by the fact that the road journey would take 100 minutes at off peak times and that the provision of rail access would be difficult, and that the rail journey would take 75 minutes. Also an airport at Sheppey would mean severe restrictions to Southend Airport and would necessitate removing the Ministry of Defence firing range at Shoeburyness. These it considered would make Sheppey an expensive site. Again the basic cost of the airport was put at £45 million. The difficulties of constructing an airport at Sheppey would add £15 million to the cost, while a further £2 million should be added for road access costs and another £40 million for the rail access costs. Further £25 million needed to be

1. Ibid., p. 19.

added for the cost of removing Shoeburyness facilities of the Ministry of Defence, and £5 million for the cost of interference to Southend Airport. This would make the total cost of Sheppey £132 million.¹

The Government and the Political Debate on the Stansted Choice

This section will be concerned only with the Government's participation in the political as opposed to the technical controversy over the Stansted decision, though in reality, of course, the two are in this case inseparable. The technical aspect will be looked at later. The decision had brought a large number of protests, both locally and nationally. In addition, in the period before the Government's decision to hold a new inquiry, there was discontent on both sides of both Houses of Parliament. The Government faced therefore the major problem of trying to implement an unpopular decision in the face of considerable opposition inside and outside Parliament. The fact that there was such opposition meant that the Government would have difficulty in holding to its position of the Stansted choice and in implementing the decision through such a means as the Special Development Order. In a way, the Government was faced with the need to make Stansted politically palatable to its supporters, and to mollify the opposition as much as possible. This period of the controversy can be seen as constituting three phases: the summer of 1967 while Mr. Jay was President of the Board of Trade; the autumn of 1967 while Mr. Crosland worked

1. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

himself into his position as the President of the Board of Trade and familiarized himself with and reassessed the Stansted decision; and the winter of 1967-68 when the Government proposed and sought support for a scheme involving realigned runways at Stansted. Throughout this period, there was a slowly diminishing determination on the part of the Government to stand by the Stansted choice as the best solution in a bad situation. Only in February 1968 did the position begin to change and finally did change significantly.

During the summer months of 1967, the Government showed itself reluctant to alter, and determined to uphold its decision on Stansted. The Minister in charge of airports' policy, Mr. Jay, was dogmatic and inflexible in the stand which he took in defence of the decision to site the airport at Stansted and in his determination to implement that decision. This can be seen, for instance, in his uncompromising speech in the National Airports' Policy debate in the House of Commons at the end of June 1967¹ and in his reaction to the NWEHPA delegation which visited him at the Board of Trade the day before the debate.² He brushed aside requests for a new inquiry on the grounds that there had already been enough inquiries and that there was no need for another inquiry.

But the Government as a whole was, in public at least, also determined to proceed with the decision, although there seems to have

1. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 749, 29 June, 1967, Cols. 785-804 passim.

2. The Times, 29 June, 1967.

been no attempt to present its case following the publication of the White Paper. It was only when the opposition pressure began to build up to alarming proportions during June and especially inside the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) that some attempt was made to present its case and counter the opposition to the decision. They were especially concerned over the fact that over a hundred of their backbenchers, including senior members of the PLP, had signed an early day motion (EDM) calling for a new inquiry into the Stansted site as the third London Airport. The Government attempted, therefore, to win its backbenchers back into following its policy. A meeting of the PLP was held in the middle of June at which Mr. Jay and Mr. Greenwood pressed the Government case for Stansted on lines presented in the White Paper.¹ But the Government did not merely use persuasion with the backbenchers: they put on a three line 'whip' for the debate on National Airports' Policy to force their backbenchers to vote against a Conservative motion calling for a new inquiry into the siting of the third London Airport and to vote for an amendment supporting Government policy. All except 10 Labour MPs voted with the Government so that the 'whip' had succeeded in bringing the Party into line where persuasion had not. Government determination could also be seen in its approach to the Essex County High Court case against the Minister of Housing and Local Government. They argued that the decision was a political one, and the case should be struck

1. The Guardian, 22 June, 1967.

out of Court,¹ which it was.²

The political case for Stansted rested upon the argument that it was the responsibility of the Government to make the decision after considering all the factors, national and local, which had a bearing upon the choice of the site of the airport. Mr. Jay accepted that it was right "that all local objections should be heard and that is why we appointed a public inquiry."³ But he considered in this case that the public inquiry had been held, the local objections had been made known and they had been considered by the Government in its review of the public inquiry. The holding of the public inquiry did not mean that the Government had to accept the local objections. In the Government's view, the job of the Inspector was to report the local objections to the Government for their consideration and his role was not that of an umpire, as some of the local pressure groups seemed to think. The Government in this case considered his report after the public inquiry and decided that, in spite of objections upon local grounds, on balance Stansted was the most suitable site. One of the arguments put forward was that the choice had been the subject of three inquiries and was the most suitable site in spite of some drawbacks. Therefore the site had to be developed, even though the Government recognized that the way the decision was reached and the way that the planning

1. The Times, 25 July, 1967.

2. Ibid., 27 July, 1967.

3. Hansard (Commons), op. cit., Co. 803.

machinery operated was not the most satisfactory way. Concern over the planning machinery, which was changed later, was voiced by Mr. Greenwood, then responsible for planning as the Minister of Housing and Local Government.¹

Behind the scenes the Government was not united and some members were not happy about the decision. The most unsatisfactory way in which the decision was reached, particularly from the planning aspects, was one of the causes of this discontent inside the Government. There had been considerable debate inside the Government over this issue. Mr. Anthony Crosland, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, and a member of the Noise Abatement Society for several years, was believed to be one of those who was very unhappy about, if not opposed to, the decision. One of the reasons for his opposition seems to have been based upon the fact that no consideration had been given to the position of schools and colleges in the area. The transfer of Mr. Crosland to the Board of Trade at the end of August 1967 provided a minor watershed in this period of the controversy. The changeover did not bring a new policy because, in public at least, he held to the Government position and policy. But it did bring a change

1. The Guardian, 22 June, 1967. One of the side effects of the Stansted case was a review by the Government of the planning machinery, which had proved inadequate to handle this project, and its decision to change the then existing planning machinery, which only allowed for local inquiries into specific projects, so that multiple sites such as alternative sites for the airport could be considered by the same inquiry at the same time, rather than waiting for one site to be rejected before another could be considered.

in the atmosphere in the controversy because Mr. Crosland was not dogmatic in his defence of the Government stance. He was prepared, unlike his predecessor, to talk about the question.¹ His general approach to the issue was therefore much more flexible.

Once installed in the Board of Trade he ordered a new review of the decision and of the alternatives to Stansted. The conclusion arrived at by this internal review seems to have been that the advantage still lay with Stansted, but that there was not much of a cost difference between it and an airport at Foulness when all the factors were taken into consideration.² But the review did take account of factors which had been neglected previously. For instance, the cost of sound-proofing buildings afflicted by aircraft noise was included in the review this time.

The result of the review was that the Government decided, particularly on the grounds of timing, to continue with the Stansted scheme but in a revised form.³ To reduce the noise effects, the Government decided that there was a need to realign the runways at Stansted even though this would increase the cost and the amount of farmland that would be taken for the construction of the airport.⁴ Although it was not until January that the details of the revised scheme

1. Interview.

2. The Guardian, 9 November, 1967.

3. Sunday Times, 12 November, 1967.

4. The Guardian, 10 November, 1967.

were sent to the local authorities, the idea of the realignment was not greeted with much enthusiasm by those opposed to the airport at Stansted. The fact that there was to be no new public inquiry even though different people would now be affected raised the possibility that the House of Lords might defeat the Special Development Order when it came before that House.¹ In January the local authorities received details of the new proposed layout of the airport which was to involve the initial construction of a pair of parallel runways 7500 feet apart upon a virtually N/S axis, with the other pair of runways being constructed on the outside of the original ones at a later date. Five hundred extra acres of farmland would be needed and the additional cost would be in the region of £8-10 million.² This met with strong disapproval from the local pressure groups and this fact was to constitute one of the factors which led to the decision to hold a new inquiry. But before examining these factors, the Government's contribution to the technical debate will be looked at.

The Government in the Technical Debate over the Stansted Choice

The Government's contribution to the technical debate at this stage of the controversy was important because it showed that the technical basis of the Government case was on many grounds, at best, doubtful. It also pointed to the fact that full consideration had not been given to all aspects of the problem. Their contribution to this

1. Sunday Times, 12 November, 1967.

2. The Times, 16 January, 1968.

debate also showed up inconsistencies in the positions which had been held by the Government at different periods of the controversy. The failure to back up their case and decision with detailed supporting arguments and evidence for Stansted is an important factor in the external environment of the local pressure groups. It enabled them to show up the weakness of the Government position very easily, and it placed the Government in a politically awkward position, which they were to find eventually was untenable. A detailed exposition of the Government case presented in the period to February 1968 is not needed here because their case remained essentially that which they had presented in the White Paper on May 1967, which was examined earlier in this chapter. But there were a number of changes, mainly of emphasis. It was these changes that are most important at this stage because they created the environment in which the already existing distrust and suspicion of the Government, created by the decision of May 1967, was to increase even further.

Throughout the period the Government held to its view that Stansted had to be developed as the best possible site because there was no time for a new inquiry. One of the major reasons, which now emerged, for choosing Stansted was the fact that the Government now considered the need for a new airport to be urgent and Stansted was the only one which could be ready in time. The Government felt that no further time could be wasted in developing the site of the airport if it was to be ready before Heathrow and Gatwick became satu-

rated, which it was thought would happen by about 1974.¹ This argument of the urgent need for the airport and the need for an immediate start, was one that was continually put forward in public and was one which was to strongly influence the thinking of the Government in the issue. This had been one of the major themes of Mr. Jay's May Press Conference which introduced the decision,² and it was one of the reasons for the Government decision in November to stick to Stansted as the site after the re-examination undertaken by Mr. Crosland in the Autumn.³

In this context, the argument was also developed that it was too late now to hold a new public inquiry because it would take a number of years to plan the development and to construct a new airport. A new inquiry would also take several years and this would lengthen the whole process of acquiring the new airport even further than it had been already.⁴ Mr. Jay, at the meeting of the PLP, argued that they had to go on with the Stansted site because the commitment had gone too far for the Government to turn back and because there was now no alternative site available at a feasible overall cost.⁵

1. See for instance Mr. Jay: Hansard (Commons), op. cit., Cols. 788-789.

2. Daily Mail, 13 May, 1967.

3. Sunday Times, 12 November, 1967.

4. For example, Lord Beswick for the Government in the House of Lords. Hansard (Lords), Vol. 287, 11 December, 1967, Col. 998.

5. Financial Times, 22 June, 1967.

The 'urgency' argument was linked to the need for Britain's airports to maintain a competitive position in Europe. The Government foresaw Britain losing its lead in this field unless the airport was developed quickly. The major aim of airport policy was, argued Mr. Jay, to make sure that Britain maintained "its present European lead in civil aviation and that we remain ahead of our competitors."¹ The result of a failure to do this would mean that the balance of payments would suffer, and the Government claimed that an airport at Stansted would contribute more to the balance of payments than the agricultural production of the Stansted area would through savings on imports.²

Some points over the development of new airport capacity, including the new airport, were clarified. In his speech during the debate on National Airport Policy, Mr. Jay said that a second runway at Gatwick would be built. Challenged on this point by Mr. Robert Carr, for the Opposition, he stated the position clearly: "I am saying categorically that we mean to proceed with it. I have said that that extension should be completed by 1971 or 1972."³

Another point raised was the nature of the airport which was going to be built. In the White Paper, there had been hints about building a four runway airport, which had caused concern. In his

1. Hansard (Commons), op. cit., Col. 785.

2. Ibid., Cols. 785-6.

3. Ibid., Col. 788.

press conference in May, Mr. Jay said that the initial proposal was to have an airport with two parallel runways fully operational by 1974, although there would be scheduled services from 1968 onwards. According to Mr. Jay, at this time the extra land needed would be between 2,000 and 2,500 acres. But he also said that it would be further developed after 1974, which would bring the airport to four parallel runways.¹ And he hoped the question of the fourth London airport could be avoided by increases in the traffic being handled by the expansion of Stansted.² By the end of June there had been some changes here: Mr. Jay was now saying that an extra 2,800 acres was required for a two runway airport and the position over the other two runways was vaguer. "Only if an eventual four runway airport were required, which is a distant possibility certainly not needed until the 1980's, if at all, would a further 1,200 acres over and above that be wanted."² With the realignment proposals 500 acres more would be required and throughout there was no attempt to estimate the amount of land that would be needed for associated development that was bound to be needed by the airport.

Their position on the costs of the airport and its alternatives was also flexible. The figures which Mr. Jay produced during the debate are similar though not exactly the same as those quoted in the

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 19 May, 1967.
2. Daily Mail, 13 May, 1967.
3. Hansard (Commons), op. cit., Col. 801.

White Paper.¹ In the National Airports' Policy debate, Mr. Jay said the cost of Sheppey would be at least £120 million and probably nearer £130 million as opposed to £132 million in the White Paper. The rail access figures seemed to be the flexible element here as he thought these would be at least £30 million and possibly over £40 million.² On the other hand, the cost of Stansted now included the cost of closing the Wethersfield base which would increase the Stansted cost from £47 million to £55 million.³ But the figures given by Lord Kennet in the House of Lords' Stansted debate in December 1967 were very different. Construction costs he put at £59 million for Stansted, £65 million for Sheppey and for Foulness.⁴ Road and rail surface transport costs were estimated at £7 million for Stansted, a minimum for Sheppey of £27 million and £22 million for Foulness.⁵ He did mention the closure of Wethersfield but he put no cost upon this item, although he did estimate the cost of closing the Shoeburyness firing range at £20 to £25 million.⁶ And finally overall he argued that Sheppey would cost £31 million more than Stansted, while Foulness on the land would cost £35 million more.⁷ The estimates

1. These figures were quoted above: pp. 100-102.

2. Hansard (Commons), op. cit., Col. 797.

3. Ibid., Col. 800.

4. Hansard (Lords), op. cit., Col. 873.

5. Ibid., Col. 876.

6. Ibid., Col. 877.

7. Ibid., Col. 879.

of travel times seemed to have varied. Mr. Jay's road travel times remained the same, but the rail departure points changed from Victoria to Kings Cross and Liverpool Street for no apparent reason. He estimated Stansted-Kings Cross as a journey of 40 minutes and Stansted-Liverpool Street as one of 50 minutes.¹ Sheppey-Kings Cross was put at 60 minutes and Sheppey-Liverpool Street at 70 minutes.² Lord Kennet put the journey times from central London at 45 to 50 minutes for Stansted, with Sheppey by road 30 minutes longer than Stansted and 15 to 20 minutes longer by rail than Stansted. But it is not clear from his speech whether it is the road or the rail journey time he gave for Stansted-Central London.³ In the same debate Lord Beswick, winding up for the Government, put the road travel time from Central London to Stansted as 65 minutes, though he seemed somewhat surprised.⁴ The position over access time, like that over costs, is therefore not as clear as it should have been if the decision had been well thought out.

But these were not the only Government statements that caused suspicion among the local pressure groups. The arguments relating to noise and agriculture also changed. The argument on agriculture had been changed to pointing out that the loss of good agricul-

1. Hansard (Commons), op. cit., Col. 800.

2. Ibid., Col. 796.

3. Hansard (Lords), op. cit., Col. 876.

4. Ibid., Col. 992.

tural land would be as great at any other site as it would be at Stansted. This was done by taking into account land needed for ancillary developments around Sheppey which would take good agricultural land although the airport itself would have been built on marshy land.

Indeed, Lord Kennet went so far as to argue that this land was higher grade land than that which was to be taken at Stansted.¹ But no estimate was made of the land needed for ancillary developments at Stansted or the type of land that would be used for that development.

The implication from the White Paper was that Sheppey was more suitable than Stansted on noise grounds. By June in the Debate, Mr. Jay was arguing that the White Paper had only used a narrow test of 3-4 miles from the airport and on this basis Sheppey was more favourable. But now he employed a wider test based upon the number of people, affected in a 10-12 mile range, whom he thought could not be ignored. This, perhaps conveniently, showed that Stansted was more favourable. Only 120,000 people would be affected at Stansted against 200,000 for Sheppey.² Sheppey would also be more severely affected by noise, according to Lord Kennet. Using the 40 noise and number index (NNI) contour as his basis for comparison, he estimated that at Sheppey 36,000 people would be affected against 20,000 at Stansted.³

1. Ibid., Cols. 875-876.

2. Hansard (Commons), Col. 797.

3. Hansard (Lords), op. cit., Cols. 874-875.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN OPERATION AND GOVERNMENT
ACTIONS : FEBRUARY 1968-MARCH 1969

There was a major change in the external environment of the local pressure groups in February 1968, when the Government decided, under considerable pressure, to hold a new inquiry into the decision to site the airport at Stansted and into the whole issue of the third London airport. This decision seems to have been the result of a reconsideration of the position of the President of the Board of Trade, following consultations with the local authorities over the proposed scheme for the realignment of the runways at Stansted. In these consultations, the Government had found the local authorities adamant in their opposition to the site and the realignment.¹

The failure of the Government to gain approval from the local pressure groups for their realignment scheme was only one of the reasons for the change in the Government's position. By the beginning of 1968, the Government was coming under considerable pressure on the issue. The decision, as will be seen in detail in the next chapter, had been widely condemned by a large number of experts and groups, in the country as a whole and in the locality. But it was also clear that the Government would face considerable difficulties in obtaining the passage of the crucial Special Development Order through the House of Lords. The House of Lords was the vital body at this time for all the groups concerned in the controversy because it had

1. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 759, 22 February, 1968, Cols. 667-8.

the power to kill the Stansted scheme by rejecting the Special Development Order. Special Development Orders were not subject to the provisions of the Parliament Act, which meant that the House of Lords did have a veto power. And more crucial, by the middle of February, it was clear that the Government faced the possibility of defeat in the House of Lords. The Government's attempt to muster support seemed to be meeting with failure. In a report after the reversal was announced, it was estimated in the Daily Telegraph, that the Government thought that about 200 Peers from all sides of the House would have voted against the Order and that less than 100 were willing to support the airport proposals. One of the leading Peers opposed to the decision estimated that about 90 per cent of the Conservatives would oppose the Order, that about 95 per cent of the cross benchers and more than 10 per cent of the Socialists would also oppose the Order.¹ The other event that may have contributed to the decision to reverse the Government's stand was the report of the Council on Tribunals which report the Government had received the day before the reversal decision was announced in Parliament. This had called for a new inquiry.²

This decision meant that the Government would now wait for the results of this new inquiry before proceeding with the development

1. Daily Telegraph, 26 February, 1968. The possibility of a Government defeat in the House of Lords was confirmed by the MPs interviewed. The position of the House of Lords in the controversy will be considered later in Chapter 8.

2. The Council on Tribunals will be discussed in the next chapter.

of Stansted or any other site into the third London Airport. The Government now directed its attention to setting up the inquiry. The terms of reference and the membership of the Commission of Inquiry were announced during the early part of the summer of 1968. Subsequent to that, the Government adopted the position of waiting for the report of the Inquiry before making any further decisions. It was out of their hands for the time being.

The external environment of the local pressure groups had changed because the situation was no longer one of a fight to make the Government change its mind and to prevent the Government from implementing a decision already made. There was no longer the need to mobilize as much political support as possible to place the Government in an untenable political position. The situation had moved from that of political campaigning to that of the need to present a detailed technical case to a body of experts who were inquiring into the issue. The need was to convince this body of experts of the soundness of the technical case and evidence being presented to it. Strategy and Tactics of all the groups concerned needed to adapt to the new situation in the controversy.

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN OPERATION : THE ROSKILL COMMISSION

The non-statutory Commission of Inquiry on the third London Airport, headed by Mr. Justice Roskill, was set up during the summer of 1968. Besides Mr. Justice Roskill, the members of the

Commission were: Professor Colin Buchanan (Professor of Transport, Imperial College of Science and Technology); Mr. A. Goldstein (a partner in R. Travers Morgan and Partners, consulting engineers); Mr. A. J. Hunt (Principal Planning Inspector at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government); Professor Keith-Lucas (Professor of Aircraft Design, College of Aeronautics, Cranfield); Mr. A. Knight (Finance Director, Courtaulds Ltd) and Professor A. A. Walters (Professor of Econometrics and Social Statistics, Birmingham University).¹

The purpose of the Commission was to "inquire into the timing of the need for a four runway airport to cater for the growth of traffic at existing airports serving the London area, to consider the various alternative sites, and to recommend which site should be selected."² The Commission was to carry out such research as was needed to aid its investigations. Its attention was drawn to certain matters which were particularly relevant to its inquiry. These included general planning issues such as population and employment growth, noise, amenity and the effects on agriculture and existing property. They also included issues relating to aviation, surface access, defence and costs, including the need for a cost benefit analysis.³

1. Financial Times, 25 June, 1968.

2. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 765, 20 May, 1968, Col. 38.

3. Ibid., Cols. 38-9. In calling for general issues to be investigated, the Government took advantage of the fact that general issues and several alternative sites could be considered at the same time under the new procedures for planning inquiries into projects of this nature. In addition it was clear that unless there was a full investigation into all the issues and sites as the local pressure groups demanded, they would not accept the choice of Stansted if it was chosen again.

The Commission was to proceed in five stages, as outlined by the Government. There is no need to outline all of these because they are not relevant, as events turned out, to this study. In the first stage, the Commission was to give consideration to alternative sites, and to eliminate those it considered unsuitable. After considering the general questions relating to these sites and the need for a new airport, it was to draw up a short list of sites for further consideration. The second stage called for the hearing of evidence of a local character concerning these sites through a local public inquiry conducted by the Senior Planning Inspector, who was a member of the Commission.¹

These two stages of the Inquiry are the operative factors in the external environment of the local groups from June 1968 until March 1969. Their attention was focussed upon this because it would give them the fair and impartial inquiry which they had been demanding. It was now up to them to present their case before the inquiry. In a sense, they were now back to the public inquiry stage of 1965-6, when the major aim had been to present the best possible case at the inquiry. This required expertise. The position was again the same, namely, they would need to muster the necessary expertise to present the best possible case to a body of experts, and given the nature of the inquiry, it had to be technically sound. This required careful preparation by experts.

1. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 765, 20 May, 1968, Cols. 39-40.

In the first stage the Commission called for proposals of sites, including details of location, and runway alignments by the middle of September 1968 and for detailed proposals by the end of October. The Commission wanted information which would relate to, among other things, the construction of the airport, the effect on the location and surrounding regions, and aviation and access problems of the site proposed.¹ Once it had received these, the Commission worked to draw up a short list of proposed sites for further investigation. In March 1969 it produced a short list which was comprised of Cublington (Wing), Foulness (off shore), Nuthampstead and Thurleigh (Bedford).²

This conclusion, which was accepted by the Government, was a major factor in the external environment of the local pressure groups, for it meant in effect the end of the Stansted controversy. Stansted, whatever else it might become, was not to be the Third London Airport. For most of the local pressure groups, this meant that they had achieved their objectives and needed no longer be directly concerned with the question of the third London airport. Essex County Council continued to be concerned with Foulness, which was their choice for the location, while yet other groups, including the Hertfordshire County Council, joined the fight to prevent Nuthampstead, about 10 miles North West of Stansted, from being chosen as the location of the airport.³

1. Financial Times, 16 July, 1968.

2. Commission on the Third London Airport: Short list of Sites and Site Information for stage (II) Local Hearing I. Foulness (Offshore). London: HMSO, 1968, p. 1.

3. As yet no decisions have been made, as the Commission is still working.

CHAPTER FIVE

THIRD LONDON AIRPORT AT STANSTED?

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS : (2) OTHER GROUPS

The focus of attention in this chapter will first be upon that part of the external environment which was composed of other groups, local and national, which were involved in the controversy,¹ and second, upon the climate of opinion that existed over this issue.² The actions and attitudes of these other groups, and the climate of opinion will be examined briefly as factors which had to be taken into account by the local pressure groups and by the Government. They were also factors which contributed significantly to the final outcome of the controversy and the success of the local pressure groups in preventing the development of Stansted.

1. These groups are also pressure groups but will be referred to as other groups to distinguish them from the local pressure groups which are the subject of this study. The groups referred to in this chapter are not the subject of this study. Therefore, there will be no attempt to analyse their behaviour except where such an analysis will contribute to an understanding of the behaviour of the local pressure groups which are the subject of this study.

2. The Climate of Opinion over the issue refers to the degree of public and group awareness of and interest in the issue, outside of the local pressure groups. It also includes the opinions and attitudes displayed over the issue by these other groups and in the press and broadcast media. In this case, the activities and attitudes of these other groups are an important part of the climate of opinion in addition to the press who will be examined under this heading.

The examination of these parts of the external environment indicates that the local pressure groups were operating in an environment which was favourable to their position and in general it was hostile to that of the Government and its Departments concerned. It was clear that there was considerable local unrest over the issue throughout the controversy. It was also clear in the post-decision phases that there was strong opposition to the development of Stansted from a wide range of national groups, who were concerned about aspects of the decision relating to their specialist interests, and from the national press. Finally, it was also clear that throughout the controversy both at the local and national level, the supporters of the airport proposal were few and far between, and with the exception of the British Airports Authority (BAA) of no importance in the controversy. The fact that their external environment was largely favourable affected their strategy and tactics because they did not have to devote much attention to countering other groups when they were using the channels of influence. Instead they were able to devote their energies to putting their case against Stansted, against the decision for Stansted and for a new inquiry. The only exception to this was the need in the post-decision phases to counter some of the arguments and activities of BAA who were active and influential advocates of Stansted. But even that did not require much attention because the activities and arguments of many of the other groups and the national press countered BAA and indeed, the Government's argu-

ments as well. The fact that there was considerable local and national opposition from a wide range of groups enabled them to show that their protest had very wide local and national support. The fact that there was this local and national opposition enhanced their position because it gave them authoritative backing for the stand which they took against the development of Stansted.

BRITISH AIRPORTS AUTHORITY (BAA)

BAA was the group, outside of certain elements inside the Government, which was the most determined and vocal advocate of Stansted as the choice for the Third London Airport. They only entered the controversy after the public inquiry had been completed.¹ But

1. BAA was set up under the 1965 British Airports Act which had reorganized the administration of aviation and airports. BAA, which began operations on April 1st, 1966, had been created from parts of the Ministry of Aviation to operate Britain's international airports of London (Heathrow), London (Gatwick) and Prestwick. In addition, it had been given responsibility to operate the airport at Stansted. Its function was to operate these airports, while responsibility for policy with regard to the numbers, location and functions of airports in Britain was retained with the Ministry, which shortly afterwards was absorbed into the Board of Trade as a section dealing with aviation. Besides taking over these functions from the Ministry, BAA also took over certain of the Ministry personnel who had been concerned with airports and in particular with the question of the siting of the new airport for London. Although the Chairman, Mr. Peter Masefield, was not with the Ministry at that time, he had served in Government Departments concerned with aviation and with the nationalized airlines in the past. Two of his senior officials, Mr. G. Hole, the Chief Executive of BAA, and Sir John Briscoe, Director of Operations for BAA came directly from the old Ministry and had been directly concerned in the choice of Stansted as members of the Inter-Departmental Committee and as Ministry witnesses at the Stansted Public Inquiry. A result was that BAA inherited and developed the same basic attitudes which the old Ministry of Aviation had displayed towards the choice of Stansted. But with its officials free from the restrictions of being civil servants in the Government, it became an active pressure group.

subsequently they acted as a vocal 'national public authority pressure group' pushing for Stansted as the Third London Airport. They were important in the external environment of the local pressure groups because they seemed to be pushing the Government into developing Stansted without a new inquiry, regardless of any of the arguments put forward against the development of Stansted and for the holding of a new inquiry. BAA's activities and arguments, and the influence they were perceived to have over the Government, particularly Mr. Jay and the Board of Trade, increased the suspicions of the local pressure groups that the Government, in making and holding to the decision for Stansted, was allowing itself to be controlled by aviation interests. These interests, in the view of the local pressure groups, had had undue influence in decisions on this question from the outset. BAA's activities in the controversy were seen by the local pressure groups as the continuation of that influence and this reinforced the determination of the local pressure groups to gain a new inquiry which would examine all aspects of the issue.

BAA entered the controversy as a national public authority pressure group which wanted the Government to choose Stansted as the site of the Third London Airport, and, once the decision had been made, for them to stand by that decision and implement it as quickly as possible. They wanted the airport at Stansted and they wanted to be allowed to begin to develop it, as they were satisfied that it was the only suitable site. As the site satisfied aviation needs which they

considered to be the deciding factors, they wanted to move ahead and develop the airport, particularly as the need for it was becoming urgent. Above all, they did not want to have to face a new inquiry which would take up valuable time. To achieve these aims, BAA pursued a vigorous public campaign. The local pressure groups also suspected that they pursued a vigorous private campaign as well.¹ They hired for themselves a public relations firm² and leaders of BAA, especially Mr. Masfield, were active in the public arena. Throughout the later phases of the controversy, Mr. Masfield made a series of speeches, which had been initiated before the decision was made, on the Stansted issue in an attempt to hurry the Government

1. Their public activities are well documented in the newspapers, but there is no evidence in the sources used for this study, of any 'behind the scenes' activity, though many of the individuals interviewed hinted at this and assumed there was. It would, on the other hand, be strange if BAA had not put pressure on the Government in private. Three factors would point to this. First, as a public authority directly concerned and with personnel who had been directly concerned in decision-making in the early stages, it would be very odd if they were not officially consulted or if they had not pressed their views on the problems connected with the choice. Second, BAA officials undoubtedly had contacts with officials in the Board of Trade who were concerned with this decision because these same officials in the aviation section had worked with BAA officials in the Ministry of Aviation less than two years before. Third, the strength with which the BAA case was pushed in public, by Mr. Masfield in particular, would suggest that private channels would not be neglected. For our purposes it is not important to establish whether and how much private pressure was exerted, because what is important is the fact that the local pressure groups suspected that this was the case.

2. Their account was handled by two former Labour Party employees, one of whom had been an assistant who accompanied Harold Wilson during the 1964 Election, and the other of whom had worked at Transport House, Labour Party Headquarters, for two years. Sunday Telegraph, 4 June, 1967.

into a decision and then to hold to their decision once it had been made.¹ After the decision, BAA officials engaged in the controversy both nationally and locally through letters to the press, press conferences, press interviews and TV appearances. In a particular effort to influence the local public on the nature of the development that would take place at Stansted, BAA produced an eight-page give away brochure entitled 'An Airport for the 70's'. This was an attempt to show how beneficial and attractive the airport would be for the area.²

BAA stressed that there was an urgent need for the new airport. As early as February 1966, Mr. Masfield had said that the new airport would be needed in the early 1970's.³ In March 1966, he stressed that they needed to know urgently where the airport would be sited.⁴ As time went by, he became more and more insistent on having a decision, so much so that in January 1967 he demanded an answer on the location of the site within a month. In addition, he warned that if Stansted were not to be chosen as the site, the Government would be running late in its programme to develop a new airport, because the preliminaries for another site would take two years. The con-

1. These speeches and those of other leading BAA officials were made to a wide range of groups such as the Parliamentary Labour Party Aviation Group and the Air Transport section of the London Chamber of Commerce.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 1 September, 1967.

3. Daily Telegraph, 21 February, 1966.

4. Financial Times, 29 March, 1966.

sequence of the delay in the construction of the new airport would mean that air traffic would have to be turned away from London.¹

On the issue of the timing of the need for the new airport, BAA stressed throughout the rest of the controversy that they needed the new airport in the early 1970's if they were to maintain London's position as a leading European air traffic centre. This national interest angle was stressed throughout the latter part of 1967 in relation to the foreign currency that would be lost if traffic were turned away to continental European airports.²

One of the attractions of Stansted for BAA was the fact that it was an airport that was already in existence. This had several advantages. It would allow them to absorb immediate growth in air traffic. It would enable the site to be developed by 1974 when they estimated that the new airport would be needed. The speed with which Stansted could be developed was therefore a major argument for Stansted in the view of the BAA. In addition, Stansted was attractive on the grounds of air traffic control because it would allow the other London airports to operate at the fullest possible capacity and would not interfere with their air routes. BAA also saw Stansted as being suitable on the grounds that it would not need a great deal of work or money to develop the access routes to the airport and on the ground that it

1. The Times, 6 January, 1967.

2. E.g., Harlow Gazette, 24 November, 1967. It was useful to stress the foreign currency angle in this period as the Pound Sterling was devalued in November 1967.

presented no major construction problems, which meant that it could be developed cheaper and quicker than some alternative site. In the BAA view, the Stansted site would interfere with and inconvenience fewer people than other alternative sites, and the Stansted area was one in which there was plenty of room for the development of the ancillary needs of the airport, such as housing and public services for the airport employees.

BAA envisaged that Stansted would be developed into a large modern international airport. Mr. Masefield said at a Press Conference in June 1967, that fully developed with four parallel runways, Stansted could become London's Number One airport with 40 million passengers a year. The development, though, would be gradual with the second runway built by about 1974 and the third runway by the 1980's.¹ But on the other hand, the Authority also was trying to stress that the development was not as great as local people thought, and its impact upon the local area was exaggerated. "It is just not true that 'something like 15,000 acres of the best agricultural land will go under bricks and concrete' at Stansted — nor that 'schools will become subjected to the intolerable noise and will have to be closed' while 'hospitals will have to be moved'" and "the loss of countryside will be much less than has been suggested — not more than 4,000 additional acres — which is less than 0.4 per cent of Essex."²

1. Daily Telegraph, 13 June, 1967; Herts and Essex Observer, 16 June, 1967.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 16 June 1967.

Mr. Masfield did not see why a modern airport should be a 'desert of concrete' and thought it was a challenge to combine modern transport with pleasant surroundings and elegantly designed buildings.¹ Indeed, he thought that with imagination and local consultation, Stansted could become an asset to the local community. This attitude provided the theme of the brochure 'An Airport for the 70's' which BAA distributed in the Stansted area in September 1967. They stressed how attractive and beneficial the airport would be to the area. Development of Stansted could bring to the area "all the benefits of a modern international airport, including access to world markets for many expanding towns and industries, new career opportunities for young people, new business opportunities for whole neighbourhoods, and a new source of income for the local authorities." And they went on to say that "with good planning, it can be made into one of the world's most attractive airports in park like surroundings, unencumbered by heavily built up areas around it."² But the national need for air transport and foreign currency would override the preservation of the countryside. Destruction of the countryside was the price to be paid "if Britain is going to survive in the technological age," and he did not consider it a high price to pay.³

Alternative sites to Stansted were all ruled out by BAA. In

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 1 September, 1967.

3. Evening Standard, 12 June, 1967.

a letter in April, he said that the idea of building a new airport which would replace Heathrow, would be impossible and too costly.¹ The idea put forward to develop regional airports was discounted because passengers wanted to use London, and hence it was a new London airport that was needed.² On the actual alternative sites, BAA Chief Executive, Mr. Hole, claimed that it was "practically impossible to find alternative sites."³ Sheppey, which had been considered by the Government, was ruled out continually by Mr. Masefield. In a letter to The Times in April 1967, he argued that it was a misconception to think that Sheppey was a suitable alternative to Stansted. An airport there would be badly placed and costly. It was unsuitable on access grounds because it was more than 50 miles from London and it was also unsuitable on Air Traffic Control grounds because it would interfere with Heathrow.⁴ He considered an airport there would be a bad investment of public money. Later, he further contended that it would cost an extra £20 million per year in passenger transport costs if the airport was at Sheppey.⁵ He thought that it would be a 'white elephant' because the airlines would not go there.⁶ Foulness was also

1. The Times, 28 April, 1967.

2. Evening Standard, 12 June, 1967.

3. The Guardian, 15 July, 1967.

4. The Times, 28 April, 1967.

5. The Guardian, 13 June, 1967.

6. Evening Standard, 16 June, 1967.

ruled out because it had the same disadvantages as Sheppey, only it would be more costly and difficult for access.¹

The BAA was scathing in its attitude towards the local protest movement over the airport, or at least of the NWEHPA side of the movement. The Councils did not seem to enter into BAA's consideration, perhaps because they would have been more difficult to attack directly as they were public authorities. To Mr. Masfield, the protesters in NWEHPA were a group of local rich people who were concerned with protecting their own private interests. They had no idea of the national interest and of the general local interest which he was presenting. This group wanted to live in another age and keep Britain as an agricultural backwater. He considered their protest as "a very good public relations exercise . . . , making use of distorted facts and little information."² He did not think that they had much public support and only a few people really were involved in the protest.

OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

Throughout the controversy there was at the local level considerable activity concerning the proposals for the new airport at Stansted. A wide range of local groups, whose main purpose was not opposition to the airport, became involved in the controversy because the development of the airport would adversely affect their major

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 12 June, 1967.

concerns. This examination of these other local groups shows that there was extensive local discontent and concern, if not actual opposition, over the Government's proposals and decision to site the airport at Stansted. This feeling was to reach its peak after the Government made its decision to site the new airport at Stansted in the face of the objections which their own Inspector had raised and which they, in the view of the people in the locality, had not answered. This examination also shows that, while there were a number of supporters of the airport scheme in the district, the local pressure groups in fact had very considerable local support and sympathy for their position throughout the controversy and especially after the Government decision, and that the local pressure groups, especially NWEHPA, were operating in a framework of local opposition to the airport.

The activities of these other local groups are important to the controversy because they showed the Government that there was widespread local opposition from a wide range of groups which were based in the affected district and its surrounding areas. The opposition of these other groups also enabled the local pressure groups, especially NWEHPA, to point to opposition from many other local groups who were not directly part of the NWEHPA organization. Of course, it could be argued that NWEHPA was responsible for the organization of this opposition. This was not entirely true. NWEHPA rather was one focal point around which many individuals, many of whom were leaders of other groups in the locality, organized their

activity in opposition to the airport. The success of NWEEHPA encouraged other groups which might not have expressed their opposition to the airport to do so. Rather NWEEHPA was one element which grew out of the general opposition that emerged to the airport in the locality. It became the most active and organized part of the local opposition to the airport. Many of these other groups remained separate groups who were also opposed to the airport. Obviously there were individuals who were members or held offices in these organizations, who were also supporters or members of the NWEEHPA in individual capacities because they were opposed to the airport. Most of the groups discussed in this section were not part of the NWEEHPA organization, though some gave it close support. There are yet other groups, not discussed here, whose only expression of opposition was to become associated with NWEEHPA and then to send representatives to NWEEHPA's Council meetings.

The most significant point that emerges from the examination of these other local groups in relation to the controversy is that the affected districts and the surrounding region were strongly opposed to the development of Stansted. It also shows that NWEEHPA and the Councils were acting as spokesmen for their region in undertaking pressure group activity. This therefore suggests that the protest against the airport and the decision was a regionally based one which was able to gain, as will be shown later, vitally important national support.

a) Parish Councils and Village Associations

These two groups were one channel through which the local opposition was both expressed and organized.¹ They were important because they acted as a 'voice-piece' of each village, and were a means through which the village's view on the airport proposals were formulated and expressed. Their role though in the controversy tended to be an intermittent one as most of the anti-airport activity in each village was channeled through the village's local NWEHPA group. But nonetheless these groups were important to the controversy because in the initial stages they provided an already existing framework through which the local community was able to organize its opposition to the airport rapidly. Most of the local NWEHPA groups were formed at parish or village meetings which had been called by these groups to discuss the airport question and to take a stand. Through this process, they played an important part in the formulation of local opinion on this question.

The Takeley Parish Council was the first group in the locality to hold an anti-airport meeting.² In Takeley's case, partly because the village was threatened with extinction, the process of forming an

1. In the small towns and villages around Stansted, there are Parish Councils, which are small local government units which are responsible for matters relating to the Parish only, with the power to raise money to a limited extent through the rates. Other villages, which do not have a Parish Council, have set up village associations to look after matters of community interest in the village.

2. The Times, 27 July, 1964. This meeting had an attendance of nearly 800.

anti-airport group was clear-cut, with this meeting voting for its formation.¹ Initially the Parish Council called other meetings in August 1964 to complete the anti-airport group's formation. But once this was done, the Parish Council left specific anti-airport activity to the anti-airport group, though the Takeley Parish Council did outline to the public inquiry precisely how the village would be directly affected by the proposal.

The pattern varied in other villages. In Stansted Mountfitchet, the Parish Council debated the issue at several of its meetings and called several Parish Meetings on the subject. Although the October 1964 Parish Meeting defeated a resolution supporting the airport by 77 to 18 votes,² no anti-airport group was formed until a Parish Meeting in February 1965.³ The Parish Council were wary of direct involvement in the village anti-airport group even though many Parish Councillors supported the group as individuals. In May 1965, they defeated a resolution calling for it to give a £100 donation to the anti-airport group on the grounds that ratepayers' money should not be used for this purpose.⁴ The Parish Council continued its involvement in the issue by holding a Parish meeting and a Parish Poll in

1. This Takeley group was formed before NWEHHPA was formed. Indeed, the strength of the opposition shown and these events in Takeley were a spur to the formation of NWEHHPA.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 20 November, 1964.

3. Ibid., 19 February, 1965.

4. Ibid., 28 May, 1965.

October. The Parish Meeting, attended by 173 people, in two votes rejected the airport proposals by 98 to 68 votes, and supported the call for the Parish Council to give a £100 donation to the anti-airport group by 78 to 72.¹ The Parish Poll, in which 29.7% of the local government electors voted, rejected the airport proposals by 434 to 244 votes and supported the donation by 351 to 288 votes.² Following the poll, the Parish Council, in spite of opposition from Mr. C.J. Dimond, a leading proponent of the airport scheme, declared itself opposed to the airport.³

In the period before the public inquiry other Parish Councils took a number of different approaches. The Dunmow Parish Meeting in September 1964 set up an anti-airport group.⁴ The Dunmow Parish Council decided not to join the group when asked to do so.⁵ Sheering Parish Council was one of the few Parish Councils to become directly involved with NWEHPA, when they decided in September 1964 to join the fight against the airport and to see if the Parish Council could be represented on NWEHPA's Council.⁶

The other important part these groups played in the controversy

1. Ibid., 15 October, 1965.
2. Ibid., 29 October, 1965.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 18 September, 1964.
5. Ibid., 9 October, 1964.
6. Harlow Gazette, 25 September, 1964.

was in the period after the Government decision for Stansted. This decision and the way in which it had been reached brought protests from Parish Councils and Parish Meetings which sent copies of resolutions denouncing the decision to the Prime Minister and the President of the Board of Trade and other Ministers as well as local MPs.

These resolutions generally attacked the decision and the way in which the decision had been reached, and called for a new independent inquiry into the issue before the Government proceeded with the development of Stansted. Resolutions along these lines were adopted by Stansted,¹ Hatfield Broad Oak,² Great Hallingbury,³ High Wych,⁴ Sheering,⁵ and Takeley⁶ Parish Councils. These resolutions added to the protests being received from the local area by the Government and MPs.

b) Local Agricultural Groups

The local farming community was particularly concerned over the issue because the land, which was needed for the airport and associated development, was high grade agricultural land which was farmed intensively with production well above the national average.

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 16 June, 1967. In Stansted, the Chairman of the Parish Council visited 360 homes in the village and found 273 householders opposed to and 68 in favour of the airport.

2. Harlow Gazette, 9 June, 1967.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 23 June, 1967.

4. Harlow Citizen, 9 June, 1967.

5. Harlow Gazette, 9 June, 1967.

6. Herts and Essex Observer, 9 June, 1967.

The concerns of the local farming community were expressed chiefly through their own farming interest group, the National Farmers' Union (NFU), and also through the participation of farmers as individuals in NWEHPA. The farmers made their opinions known through the local County and branch organizations of the NFU, which were, in this case, at the county level the Essex Farmers Union (EFU) and the Stansted, Thaxted and Dunmow Branch.

The local farmers were concerned over the position as soon as they knew that there was a prospect that the airport would be developed together with a possible new town in the area. As early as April 1964, Mr. E.C. Metson, the Secretary of this NFU branch said that the farmers were unhappy over the situation because tenant farmers faced the prospect of eviction and loss of livelihood without compensation, while the owner farmers were faced with the prospect of not obtaining enough money through compensation for their land to be able to purchase a new farm.¹ Concern was also expressed at the branch's July meeting over the proposals put forward by the Ministry of Aviation in its July meeting with the Councils at Harlow.² But most of their activity prior to and during the public inquiry was through the EFU, which worked closely with NFU headquarters. In May 1964, the EFU had expressed grave doubts about the proposals

1. Ibid., 3 April, 1964.

2. Ibid., 31 July, 1964.

to develop the airport and the new town at Stansted. It doubted whether a serious effort had been made to follow the policy of not taking agricultural land for urban development when there were alternatives available, and they suggested consultations with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government over the problems entailed in the scheme.¹ Their major activity was to present, using the NFU counsel, a case against Stansted at the public inquiry outlining the agricultural objections to its development.

After the Government decision, the farming community, through its groups, added its protest, against the decision and the way in which it was made, to the other protests from the local community. But unlike some other local groups it became directly involved in the campaign against the Government decision as a member of the Stansted Working Party. The main burden of the farmers' protests was carried by the EFU, whose Secretary, Mr. John Walker, was their representative in the Stansted Working Party. Their responsibility was agricultural questions involved in the issue and they drew up the agricultural objections for the Stansted Working Party. They argued that any unbiased consideration of the sites for the airport would take account of the high quality of the land at Stansted and the national purpose it serves, as it is irreplaceable.² The EFU was also highly critical of the realignment proposals because they seemed to indicate

1. Essex Weekly News, 1 May, 1964.

2. Evening News, 22 June, 1967.

that the Government was determined to put the third and fourth airports at Stansted. They estimated that 19,000 acres would be needed for the airport and its ancillary developments.¹ The realignment proposals angered the local farmers even further than the Government decision had, because they deplored the fact that yet more land was being taken and because farmers now affected, who were not concerned with the original proposals, were being denied an opportunity to put their case to a public inquiry.²

c) Local Educational Groups

Opposition also came from groups concerned with education in the affected area.³ In the early phases of the controversy there were representations about the position of the schools from the local pressure groups, some of whom were responsible for the provision of educational facilities. After the Government decision in May 1967, a clearly defined opposition based upon groups concerned with education, such as teachers and parents, emerged in the area around the proposed airport. This local educational voice was centered upon three areas adjoining the new airport: Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, and

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 2 February, 1968.

2. Ibid., 28 January, 1968.

3. The building and operation of the Third London Airport at Stansted would have a drastic effect upon the schools and colleges of the area. A number of schools would be so severely affected that it would be doubtful that they would be able to continue to operate and if they could, they would be severely limited. Other schools would have problems which would interrupt teaching though not as severely as with the other group.

Dunmow and District.¹ The opposition was chiefly expressed through protest meetings, which sent resolutions opposing the airport to Ministers including the Prime Minister, the President of the Board of Trade, and the Secretary of State for Education and Science, local MPs, Councils and other groups. The most important of these meetings was the one on June 7th when 124 teachers representing 27 schools in the Bishop's Stortford district unanimously opposed the airport and called for a new inquiry.² Other meetings in Bishop's Stortford were based upon the teachers and parents of individual affected schools, who often set up their own committees to actively oppose the airport.³ Another similar committee was set up by over 100 parents and teachers at a meeting in Sawbridgeworth in late June.⁴ The development of the airport was unanimously condemned at the June meeting of the Dunmow and District Teachers' Association.⁵ In the autumn, a Parents against Stansted Committee was also formed.⁶ It planned to hold a non-stop vigil outside 10 Downing Street while the Special Development Order was debated in Parliament.⁷

1. These covered areas under the take off and approach paths.

2. Harlow Citizen, 9 June, 1967; Herts and Essex Observer, 16 June, 1967.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 7 July, 1967.

4. Harlow Citizen, 23 June, 1967.

5. Herts and Essex Observer, 16 June, 1967.

6. Ibid., 10 November, 1967.

7. Evening Standard, 20 November, 1967.

These meetings were opposed to the airport because they believed the quality of education in the locality would be affected because the noise would make teaching difficult if not impossible and because the working conditions of teachers would be intolerable. This would lead to a fall in the quality of teachers attracted to the area and noise would make it impossible to use new methods of teaching and teaching aids. They wanted a new inquiry into the question of the airport because they did not consider that these educational needs had been considered in the making of the decision.

d) Local Authorities

Opposition to the development of Stansted was not limited to the Councils in the immediate vicinity of the airport. Some lower tier councils outside this immediate area were, particularly after the Government decision, determined opponents of the decision to develop the airport. Their concern and opposition is important because it shows that there was opposition to the Government from a wide area inside the counties of Essex and Hertfordshire.

The Public Health and Town Planning Committee of Hertford Borough Council recommended their council to join the protest against the decision.¹ Chelmsford Borough Council drew up a petition which was forwarded to Mr. Peter Kirk and Mr. Stan Newens at the House of Commons stating that the Council wished to protest most strongly

1. Hertfordshire Mercury, 16 June, 1967.

the decision to site the airport at Stansted, that they supported the stand of the Essex County Council, and that they urged that a Royal Commission be set up to examine the need for airport facilities for the future.¹ Welwyn RDC decided to write to the Minister of Aviation [sic] while Ware UDC sent a resolution expressing their concern to the Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils and to their local MP.² Support for the position of the local pressure groups came from Halstead RDC.³ Chigwell UDC⁴ and Braintree RDC⁵ were among those councils which presented petitions to the House of Commons opposing the development of the airport and urging a new inquiry. Haverhill UDC, in Suffolk, was an exception as they gave halfhearted support to the airport on the grounds that improved travel links with London outweighed the adverse effects of noise.⁶

e) The Local Political Parties

The local political parties in general did not play an important part in the controversy because the local opposition was centered around the local pressure groups which included supporters and members of all political parties. The issue itself was not a party political issue and did not lend itself to party activity at the local level because

1. Essex Weekly News, 23 June, 1967.

2. Hertfordshire Mercury, 23 June, 1967.

3. Essex Chronicle, 21 July, 1967.

4. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 753, 10 November, 1967, Col. 1413.

5. Ibid., Vol. 756, 17 January, 1968, Col. 1753.

6. Saffron Walden Weekly News, 19 January, 1968.

opposition cut across party divisions, and because if the local opposition was to be successful it had to gain the support of all in the area who were opposed to the airport regardless of their party allegiance. This is not to say that opinions were not expressed by the local political parties: they were. The opinions expressed in and through their resolutions provided further evidence for the actors in the controversy of the widespread local opposition and concern over the proposals. All the local political parties expressed their opposition. The local Liberals, especially the Harlow Liberal Association, were active in attacking the proposals in the pre-inquiry phase.¹ They became less active as their support in the area declined, though the chairman of the Bishop's Stortford Liberal Association did urge all local MPs to oppose Stansted.² Opposition also came from the Harlow Branch³ and the South Essex Branch⁴ of the Communist Party which called for a new inquiry.

The most significant opposition from the local political parties was that from the local Labour Parties inside the Epping Constituency which supported their MP, Mr. Stan Newens, in his opposition to the Government. This opposition is significant because it shows that it was not merely rich Conservative landowners and businessmen who were opposed but all sorts of people including many who were members of the Labour Party. Their opposition to their own Government ensured

1. Harlow Gazette, 25 September, 1964; ibid., 19 March, 1965.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 26 May, 1967.

3. Harlow Citizen, 14 July, 1967.

4. Harlow Gazette, 9 June, 1967.

that the campaign and the local opposition was bipartisan. The Harlow Labour Party unanimously passed a resolution in which they deplored "the fact that the Government, after setting up the South East Economic Planning Council, did not consider it necessary to consult it before deciding on Stansted as the Third London Airport." They also expressed "deep concern over the Government decision to build the Third London Airport at Stansted" which they believed was "contrary to the principles of planning continually stated by the Labour Party in opposition and Government." They urged the Government to accept the Inspector's recommendation for the new inquiry and they called "upon the Government, therefore, to withdraw its present proposals and to re-examine the proposals in the light of requirements over the long term period with regard to possible developments on air travel such as vertical take off aircraft."¹ And it concluded: "Unless these proposals are withdrawn we urge Stan Newens to vote against the Government when this proposal is discussed."² This resolution was also passed by the Epping Constituency Labour Party with the recommendation to Stan Newens that he should vote against the Government if it does not think again about Stansted.³ This position was also adopted by the Sheering branch of the Epping Labour Party.⁴

1. Harlow Gazette, 2 June, 1967.

2. Harlow Citizen, 2 June, 1967.

3. Harlow Gazette, 9 June, 1967.

4. Ibid., 7 July, 1967.

f) Regional Bodies

Concern also came from important regional bodies which covered the South East of England. The South East Economic Planning Council, which had been created by the Government as part of its economic planning machinery to represent regional views on economic planning, was annoyed at the way the Government reached its decision, and was not very enthusiastic over the choice of Stansted. Their major concern was over the fact that they had not been consulted on a matter which clearly did involve regional economic planning. Soon after the publication of the White Paper they issued a statement in which they said that they "wish it to be known, as it was not apparent from the White Paper, that they were not consulted at any time about this decision." They agreed with the Government "that the strongest of the objections to Stansted was on regional planning grounds," and the Council "expected to be consulted by the Government on the resulting regional planning implications of the decision" ¹ The Council in its report in November 1967 entitled 'A Strategy for the South East' was not in favour of further development in the Harlow, Bishop Stortford and Stansted area, and was particularly against developing Stansted as an airport because it would mean housing an extra 100,000 people in green belt and country zones in this area. The Council concluded that "the Government's announcement that the third London Airport is to be

1. The Times, 18 May, 1967.

located at Stansted in Essex would present major difficulties in the light of our strategy proposals."¹ The Council's attitude was emphasized by its chairman when he said that they would have to accept the decision but it would cause major difficulties in regional planning.²

Another important regional body which was concerned, was the Standing Conference on London and South East Regional Planning. This group was made up of the local authorities with planning responsibilities in the South East of England and London. Although it was not until their meeting in December 1967 that they presented a detailed case in opposition to the Government decision on Stansted, their opposition is important because it added yet another expert and concerned group to the list of those who expressed opposition to the decision. Their opposition came at a significant point because in December 1967 and January 1968 the Government was trying to interest local authorities in the idea of a realigned runway scheme for Stansted to overcome the noise objections.

The Conference adopted a detailed report from one of its technical panels, which cast doubt upon the regional planning aspects of the Government decision. The statement adopted by the meeting was also concerned with the way the decision was arrived at. This statement, pointing to the lack of consultation, said that "the Conference has expressed its regret that at no stage of the government's consideration of the siting of a third London airport were the local planning author-

1. Harlow Citizen, 3 November, 1967.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 3 November, 1967.

ities of the region consulted through the conference although three years ago it expressed its reservations, on regional planning grounds, upon the interdepartmental committee's recommendations favouring Stansted."¹

The major thrust of the report adopted by the meeting was that the Stansted decision was unacceptable upon regional planning grounds. Indeed, it went as far as to say that it was open to greater criticism on regional planning grounds than had been mentioned before, and it thought that the decision was not in line with the plans which the conference has suggested for the Stansted area in the past. "It would mean the introduction of development of a major order into a very attractive and relatively sparsely-populated area of high quality agricultural land which is one of the few extensive areas of open countryside remaining in the south-east. In previous reports we have urged the adoption of special guards against development and spoliation in this part of north-west Essex. We have stressed the need to preserve the scale of the countryside there in the interests of both agricultural efficiency and landscape quality."² It considered that "the location of investment, employment, and population at Stansted, on the scale that is likely, would obviously destroy a considerable part of the present high value of that area in leisure and amenity terms, probably lead to the expansion of Cambridge, Luton, Braintree, and even Colchester

1. Ibid., 8 December, 1967.

2. Ibid.

beyond what would otherwise occur and at the same time result in the partial urbanization of a number of existing hamlets and villages throughout large parts of rural Essex and Hertfordshire."¹ The Stansted choice suffered yet another drawback for them: the area had no existing economic infrastructure of which the airport could take advantage. An airport at Foulness, on the other hand, had the prospect of integrating airport growth with the development of the South Essex urban complex.²

g) Local Supporters of the Airport Development

The supporters of the airport at the local level were not very numerous or very well organized throughout the controversy. The little support that there was for the airport was centered upon the Stansted Area Progress Association, which had been formed in 1965 in response to the growth of the organized opposition to the airport, which was centered around NWEHPA, to ensure that the case for the airport was put in the locality. This was a small and weak organization compared with its opponents. Its membership was mainly composed of airport workers and a few other trade unionists. While it did produce some posters and stickers supporting the airport and was represented at the public inquiry, it left the presentation of the case for Stansted in the hands of the Ministry and the Government.

1. Ibid.

2. Harlow Citizen, 8 December, 1967.

In the post-decision phase their objective was to show that there was local support for the airport rather than present a vigorous case for Stansted. They organized a petition, which had 8,000 signatures, when it was presented to the Prime Minister in November 1967.¹ In June they distributed a letter with 200 signatures attacking NWEHPA's position.² In another statement they argued that the airport would provide employment and wider scope of jobs for thousands of people and with higher wages. There would be yet more jobs through the development of ancillary industries. On the other hand, the disadvantages of noise and loss of agricultural land were overstated.³ This was also the position taken by the Harlow and District Trades Council⁴ and by the Bishop's Stortford branch of the National Union of Railwaymen⁵ in supporting the development. Other support for the airport was insignificant. A small meeting of the Harlow Young Liberals voted for the development of the airport,⁶ while two Saffron Walden Young Socialists wrote to The Times expressing their support for the airport.⁷ These two, though, were isolated instances of a few individuals within the local political parties supporting the airport.

1. Ibid., 10 November, 1967.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 26 May, 1967.

3. Harlow Citizen, 16 June, 1967.

4. Ibid.

5. Herts and Essex Observer, 14 July, 1967.

6. Harlow Gazette, 30 June, 1967.

7. The Times, 7 June, 1967.

OTHER NATIONAL GROUPS¹

The decision of the Government in May 1967 to site the airport at Stansted brought almost universal condemnation from the local and national level. The involvement of other national groups was a new dimension to the controversy as it became a national political issue following the decision. A wide range of national groups, whose specialist interests were involved in the decision, and who had no connections with the local pressure groups, entered the controversy. The overwhelming majority of these groups argued that the case for Stansted was unsatisfactory and that a new inquiry into the whole question of the airport location was needed. The result of these interventions was to lend formidable and authoritative backing to the case that the local pressure groups were putting forward. They had the public support of recognized experts who were concerned with problems involved in a major project of this kind. Overall, this increased the pressure on the Government and helped the local pressure groups place the Government in an untenable political position. As a result, the activities of these other national groups cast considerable doubt upon the credibility of the Government and BAA case for Stansted, and raised questions about the depth of the Government's consideration of the arguments for and against Stansted and the other alternative sites.

1. In this context 'national groups' refers to any group or organization which is not based in Essex or Hertfordshire, and to any group or organization which is not a regional body, using the South East Economic Planning Region as the definition of the region.

Some of the most important criticism of the development of Stansted was that of the groups concerned with the planning and construction aspects of the location of the airport. The most influential and important of these groups was the Town and Country Planning Association, which reiterated very strongly during the summer their earlier objections to the site.¹ Professor Peter Self, the chairman of its Executive, in a letter to The Times, considered that the Government had wasted the previous year without doing any basic homework and he argued that the White Paper merely repeated the old and dubious surveys on the need for a new airport.² But the major attack from the Association came in a statement from its Executive which was sent to Ministers in May 1967. This statement condemned the choice of Stansted as a "very bad one and possibly almost disastrous in its consequences for the region as well as the locality."³ They considered that the regional planning context had not been given the weight that it deserved and that the Government, given its own misgivings on these grounds, should have examined these problems more closely. They hoped that the decision might be reviewed. In July, Professor Self returned to the attack asking what the function of Stansted was to be,

1. At the time of the public inquiry, they had argued that the Stansted scheme was ill-timed, inadequately supported and unrelated to Government policies for balanced regional development. They called for the siting of the airport to be based upon a balanced national plan and full scale regional studies. The Times, 6 December, 1965.

2. The Times, 20 May, 1967.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 2 June, 1967.

as there was no long term plan of air traffic requirements.¹

The Presidents of the Town Planning Institute, the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Institute of Landscape Architects, in a joint letter to The Times, also vigorously attacked the decision. A study of the Inspector's Report and the Government White Paper left them "entirely unconvinced by the Government's case, which rests upon shaky assumptions, inadequate data and questionable arguments." The decision for them formed "no part of a coherent or comprehensive regional plan. Nor does it form part of a national transportation plan. There is no evidence that the Government has worked out the implications of locating such a large generator of traffic and employment in the heart of unspoiled countryside which, notwithstanding the White Paper's statement to the contrary, has such qualities of landscape, architecture and rural amenity that it should be excluded from consideration." And they saw it as a choice: "to allow short term expediency to set in train in rural Essex the process of piecemeal urbanization which has accompanied the growth of Heathrow: or to retract the Stansted decision and initiate forthwith the comprehensive planning studies required to satisfy public and professional opinion."²

Another expression of concern came from the groups interested in the protection of the historical, natural and rural aspects of the country. In another joint letter to The Times, the President of the

1. The Guardian, 115, July 7, 1967.

2. The Times, 28 June, 1967.

Civic Trust, Rt. Hon. Duncan Sandys MP., the Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Mr. G. Langley Taylor, the Chairman of the National Trust, Lord Antrim, and the Chairman of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Lord Euston, strongly supported the view that before the Stansted plan is "allowed to proceed, there should be an independent inquiry into the general problem of the location of airports, in all its aspects."¹

Groups representing interests connected with the land and agriculture were concerned as well. Much of the farming opposition came through the local branches of the National Farmers' Union (NFU). But this was backed by the intervention of the NFU. The NFU Deputy President wrote to the President of the Board of Trade demanding an independent inquiry. They thought that "the surveys undertaken both before and after the public inquiry of alternative sites were inadequate and could not be regarded as objective."² The plan for Stansted was also attacked by the NFU President because the resultant loss of food production would damage the national economy.³ The Country Landowners' Association deplored yet another loss of good agricultural land and they too demanded an independent inquiry.⁴

The inadequate consideration of the rail access problems and cost was attacked by groups concerned with surface transport. The

1. Ibid., 27 June, 1967.

2. Essex Weekly News, 16 June, 1967.

3. Evening News, 22 June, 1967.

4. Essex Weekly News, 19 May, 1967.

National Council on Inland Transport, in a letter to the President of the Board of Trade, criticized Stansted on the grounds that it would not have mainline rail services.¹ British Rail, who would be responsible for rail links to any site, threw doubts upon the Government's cost calculations concerning the rail links to Sheppey and Stansted. In June they claimed that the Government's estimate of £40 million for the Sheppey - Victoria rail link was an overestimate. The figure would be £25 million or less, much of which was needed for the expansion of the line anyway and was not directly attributable to an airport at Sheppey.² Later, they claimed that the rail links for a fully developed Stansted airport would cost £35 to £40 million in the long term.³

The credibility of the realignment proposals was severely questioned when, in January 1968 for the first time in the controversy, the scheme to develop Stansted was criticized by aviation interests. In a letter to The Times, an airline pilot questioned the suitability of the new alignment of the runways at Stansted. He argued that the newly proposed N/S runways would mean that the majority of movements would involve a 90 degree crosswind. He cited that the maximum permissible crosswind to land a Boeing 707 is 25 knots, which is not an exceptional wind. The result would be that Stansted would be unusable for a considerable number of days in the year.⁴ This asser-

1. The Times, 3 June, 1967.

2. Ibid., 28 June, 1967.

3. Ibid., 21 February, 1968.

4. Ibid., 18 January, 1968.

tion was supported in another letter from Captain B.A. Powell, chairman of the Technical Committee of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators, who then raised the question of safety of operations.

"Any pilot will confirm that it is easier to take off or land an aeroplane into rather than across the wind. It is incontrovertible therefore that the standard of safety, however high, must be reduced by the use of a runway which is not into the prevailing wind." He continued:

"The realignment of the runways across the prevailing wind is tantamount to reducing safety standards of any operation conducted from them, and for this reason alone the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators has written to the Board of Trade opposing the proposal." He also deplored the lack of consultation on this matter.¹ The result of these letters was to make the major prop of the case for Stansted at best disputable.

The contribution of other groups was to raise questions about the Government and BAA arguments that no other site was feasible. This was done by the presentation of the detailed feasibility studies of other sites, especially Foulness, which was considered by many groups to be the most suitable site. Two such schemes were outlined in reports published at the end of October 1967. The Noise Abatement Society had commissioned a study of Foulness which was carried out by consultants from several firms which included expert architects,

1. Ibid., 20 January, 1968.

planners, engineers, aviation and property consultants, and an economist. The main conclusion of this study was that Foulness was suitable as the site for the third airport for London, and that it would only cost £8 million more than Stansted, while it would be superior to Stansted on grounds of weather and particularly noise. Also rapid transit links by monorail would give it good access to London and the necessary land could be reclaimed. The airport could be fully operational with two pairs of runways by 1977. The site had the advantage that the Government already owned the land and that the land concerned was not of the high agricultural quality that the land at Stansted was. A copy of this report was sent to MPs and many Peers.¹

The other study emanated from a firm of consultants headed by Bernard Clark. This scheme, a copy of which was sent to every Member of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, was undertaken in the hope of persuading the Government to change its mind about Stansted and to investigate Foulness as an alternative site for the airport. This scheme proposed to build the airport on a 16 square mile island off the Essex coast. This airport, they argued, would be bigger, safer, and quieter than the proposed airport at Stansted. It would be constructed using the principles developed by the Dutch in their land reclamation projects such as the new Euro-poort at Rotterdam, and would be cheap to build. The advantage of this scheme was

1. Harlow Citizen, 3 November, 1967.

that it could reduce noise to a minimum by placing the take off and approach routes away from the coast. The size of the airport would only be limited by the amount of land reclaimed. An airport here could be linked to the development of the area and access to London could be provided by an integrated transport system, involving motorways and rapid transit links which could provide a fast outlet for exports to Europe.¹ By January 1968, a syndicate, which had the backing of many MPs and Peers, had been formed on the basis of these proposals to raise money to develop the airport at Foulness.² In addition, another group headed by Sir John Howard, a former Tory Chairman, formed a company to raise £250 million for a scheme to develop the Foulness site.³ These interventions are important because they produced studies which gave backing to the position of the local pressure groups that a new inquiry was needed. They also suggested that the Government needed to look again at the question because it could have used more imagination in approaching the problems involved in the siting of the new airport.

Powerful support for a new inquiry came in November 1967 when the Greater London Council (GLC), which is the largest single local government council in Britain, became involved in the controversy. Its General Purposes Committee reported that the Council

1. Daily Telegraph, 27 October, 1967.

2. Ibid., 25 January, 1968.

3. Evening Standard, 15 January, 1968.

should demand a new inquiry into all eleven alternative sites for the ~~third~~ third London airport.¹ The Council adopted its Committee recommendation and the GLC became committed to a new inquiry.² This was followed by an appeal to the Government in a letter to The Times from Mr. Leslie Freeman, Conservative Chairman of the GLC General Purposes Committee, to conduct an independent inquiry.³

The realignment proposals brought an intervention from the Council on Tribunals, which had responsibility for watching over the conduct of tribunals and public inquiries. In January 1968 the Government proposed that the airport runways be built on a N/S alignment instead of the original NE/SW alignment. This new alignment would have meant that people who had not been affected by the public inquiry proposals were now affected by the revised scheme. Many people including NWEHPA officials had complained to the Council about the fact that there was going to be no new inquiry on these proposals, and about the Government procedure in conducting inquiries over the Stansted proposals. In February 1968, the Council made a special report to the Lord Chancellor about the situation relating to the new proposals for the development of Stansted. "We wish to report as a matter of special importance that the making of a special development order under the Town and Country Planning Act 1962, requires, as a

1. Evening News, 30 October, 1967.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 November, 1967.

3. The Times, 16 November, 1967.

matter of justice, that all whose lives or property will be seriously affected be given an opportunity of a fair hearing of their objections at a public inquiry."¹ This report is important because it called into question the validity of the way the Government intended to proceed to implement the decisions to develop Stansted. It is not completely clear how much influence this report actually had in the decision to hold a new inquiry. The Government had this report on the 21st of February and the announcement of the new inquiry was made in the House of Commons and the House of Lords on the afternoon of the 22nd of February. It is possible that this decision had already been made, or it is possible that this was the final blow that pushed the Government to take the decision to hold another public inquiry.²

Supporters of Stansted as the Location of the New Airport

There was very little support for the Government position. The supporters were few and far between and there was little real attempt to campaign for the decision among these groups. Support for the decision was insignificant, and it could be argued that some were interested parties. The Chairman of the East Anglia Economic Plan-

1. Evening Standard, 22 February, 1968.

2. In this context it should also be noted that it was clear by this time that the Government would have considerable difficulty, if not actually be defeated, in passing the Special Development Order through the House of Lords. In addition the new inquiry procedures allowing for multiple local inquiries for a possible scheme would come into force in the Spring of 1968.

ning Council, who was also deputy Chairman of British European Airways, came out in support of the decision, though there was no position taken by the Council itself. "It means a major international airport on our doorstep, and for the benefit of the region, I welcome it."¹ The only other support came from a group based in the area around the possible Sheppey site. Here the Faversham Preservation Society was formed to campaign against any move to build an airport at Sheppey.² In a joint statement, Faversham's MP, Mr. Terry Boston, and the Secretary of the Society, Mr. Arthur Percival, forecast protests if the airport was planned for Sheppey. "We want to make it perfectly plain that the same loud protests would be raised against Sheppey as have been raised against Stansted."³ Mr. Boston also spoke in the House and the Parliamentary Labour Party against the attempts to move the airport from Stansted. Indeed, the Kent group of Labour MPs who had constituencies around Sheppey, on the north Kent coast, were concerned that the airport should stay at Stansted, and were active inside the Parliamentary Labour Party to persuade Labour MPs to support the decision.⁴

THE CLIMATE OF OPINION

The foregoing examination of the external environment indicates

1. Daily Telegraph, 2 June, 1967.
2. Evening Standard, 28 June, 1967.
3. The Guardian, 22 June, 1967.
4. Interview.

that the climate of opinion on this issue was in part hostile to the development of Stansted as the airport and to Government decision-making on this issue. These other groups which have already been examined only constitute part of the climate of opinion on this issue. So far there has been no discussion of the attitudes of the press and the broadcast media which also help to form the climate of opinion on an issue. The broadcast media was relatively insignificant in this case. They gave the issue news and current affairs coverage, with interviews with the leading actors on all sides but they limited the coverage which they gave to the issue. There was no attempt to take sides or to campaign on this issue.

The situation was very different with the Press, and especially the national Press. Throughout the controversy the local press gave the events and groups involved fairly extensive coverage. They also opened their columns to letters to the Editor on the subject. While this did not indicate the exact balance of opinion on the issue, it showed that there was considerable interest and concern over the issue as there was a vigorous correspondence with letters for and against the airport, and certainly there was more interest in this issue than in any other during this period. Editorially the local press, after the decision, was less united and less opposed to the airport than the national press. The Herts and Essex Observer, which was the leading paper to circulate in the affected area, was for accepting the decision to develop the airport and making the most out of a bad situa-

tion, although it was disturbed about the way in which the decision had been made.¹ In this, it was supported by its associated paper, the Hertfordshire Mercury.² The Braintree, Witham, Dunmow Herald took a position of support for the airport on the grounds that "it is the best compromise for the nation as a whole." It called upon the local opposition to co-operate with those developing the airport.³ The Dunmow Broadcast and District Advertiser was vigorously opposed and called upon the Government to think again.⁴

The national Press did not give the issue much coverage until after the Government decision in May 1967, when they took up this issue as a major political controversy giving it extensive coverage until February 1968. It was not a case of the press just giving extensive coverage to a newsworthy story, which it was, but rather a case where the press through their reports and through their editorials joined the battle for a new inquiry into the issue. The fact that the national press took up this issue and pressed for a new inquiry, because the Government case was weak, strengthened the stand taken by the local pressure groups for a new inquiry. It gave them clearly articulated and powerful support which would be an influence upon those that the local pressure groups sought to convince of the need for a new inquiry.

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 19 May, 1967.

2. Hertfordshire Mercury, 26 May, 1967.

3. Braintree, Witham, Dunmow Herald, 16 May, 1967.

4. Dunmow Broadcast and District Advertiser, June, 1967.

Editorially the national press was overwhelmingly opposed to the decision for the same reasons as most other national groups. They demanded a new and open inquiry into the location of the proposed airport. The Daily Telegraph questioned the credibility of the Government position. It considered that the Government's claim to have chosen the best possible site would have been more convincing if it had let an independent commission review the position.¹ The Sunday Times considered that principal justifications for Stansted, namely of speed and cost, were the two least useful criteria for far-sighted decisions as their benefits were purely short term.² The Guardian was concerned with the failure to consider the effects of the airport upon the quality of life. They considered that the social costs and benefits had not been given the consideration and weight they deserved. The best course was to set up an independent inquiry. "To press ahead with Stansted now would be mere political bravado."³ The Times was concerned with the narrow-minded approach that permeated Government decision-making on the issue: "The case against the Government's decision and the White Paper in which it is embodied is that narrow departmental considerations have been pushed beyond the point

1. Daily Telegraph, 13 May, 1967.

2. Sunday Times, 14 May, 1967.

3. The Guardian, 15-16 June 1967.

at which they should be allowed to prevail. When the wider claims of planning, transport and amenity became briefly audible at the public inquiry, even to the limited extent made possible by its terms of reference, the argument went against the official line. Whereupon the issue was recommitted to Whitehall and these awkward voices were submerged once more. But they are voices of reason, seeking to humanize the forces of technology which threaten, if left to their own momentum, to barbarize the nation."¹

1. The Times, 28 June, 1967.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LOCAL PRESSURE GROUPS —
INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

In the framework presented in Chapter Two, it was seen that the internal environment of the pressure group will affect or determine its behaviour in the political system, and in this framework these internal environmental factors were seen as long term and short term in nature, though in this case, given the short length of the controversy, they are largely indistinguishable. No attempt, therefore, will be made to divide them into their long term and short term components. This is not to say that the internal environment was static in this case, because on the contrary, there were significant changes in the internal environment of the local pressure groups as a result of feedbacks into their internal environment from the external environment in general and Government decision-making in particular. First, their membership will be established.¹ Second, the organizational factors, which include their structure, internal decision-making processes, leadership, financial resources, other resources (such as special knowledge or skills), and their mobilization potential, will be examined. Third,

1. It should be noted at this point that while the pressure groups will be examined together, they operated throughout the controversy as separate groups and councils, although there was some co-ordination of their activity during the later phases through the Stansted Working Party.

their political resources which include factors that constitute special political advantages or benefits in their efforts to exert influence or pressure, will be examined. Fourth, their aims and objectives will be looked at. Fifth, their attitudes which affected their behaviour as pressure groups in this case will be examined.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL PRESSURE GROUPS

The fact that each of the local pressure groups were operating upon different membership bases and under different sets of responsibilities contributed to differences in their behaviour as they operated in this controversy. These differences stem from the fact that the Councils were public authorities and NWEHPA and its local groups were private organizations.

The membership of the Councils was composed of elected Councillors who represented particular districts.¹ As elected representatives, these councillors had to be concerned with the problems

1. In most of the lower tier district Councils, Councillors were mostly Independents who stood for election and acted in Council without connections with or under the control of a political party. Party affiliations were irrelevant as a party system did not operate in most of these Councils, such as Dunmow RDC and Saffron Walden RDC. Harlow UDC, where Labour controlled the Council by a large majority throughout this period, was an exception. At the County level, both Essex and Hertfordshire had party systems operating in and for elections to the County Council. Essex was throughout this period overwhelmingly Conservative, while in Hertfordshire, Labour was by a small margin the largest party on the Council between 1964 and 1967, when the Conservatives secured an overwhelming majority. Although these councils had partisan politics, the issue of Stansted at no time became a subject of party politics within or during elections for these councils. Interviews.

and opinions of their constituents, but as members of a public authority, they had also to be concerned with carrying out many designated local government responsibilities that included problems besides that of the airport. These responsibilities limited the ways and areas in which the Council and its members could act because they had to consider the airport question in relation to their overall responsibilities, to their overall policies, to the interest of their area as a whole, rather than represent or join one section of their residents, however vocal. Their activity was restricted because they could not become involved as dedicated opponents of the airport but only as concerned Councils who were opposed to the development of the airport as it conflicted with their interests and responsibilities, and because they could not use their resources, particularly financial, to become embroiled in a partisan manner in a local debate over the issue.¹ The Councils adopted their position on the basis of these considerations and after weighing local public opinion, including the local opposition to the airport.²

1. On the same basis, they might have supported the airport at Stansted if there had been no conflict with their interests. For instance, the Essex County Council and many of its members were not opposed to siting the airport in their county as they wanted it to be located at Foulness in South East Essex.

2. In the early stages of the controversy, the Councils were not acting as pressure groups within the terms of the definition of a Public Authority Pressure Group, which was put forward in Chapter One, because they were attempting to carry out their normal functions in relation to a planning issue by putting forward their views to the Government Department concerned and before a public inquiry. Their activities are included at this stage because they are an integral part of the Councils' transformation into Public Authority Pressure Groups.

On the other hand, NWEHPA had been formed specifically with the purpose of opposing and leading the fight against the airport proposals. NWEHPA and its local groups were more like a mass movement than a formal organized pressure group. It provided a channel through which most of the airport opponents in the locality could join together to actively oppose the airport. These individuals attended meetings and fund-raising events, helped and contributed to the funds, and constituted NWEHPA's membership. There was no clearly defined membership of NWEHPA and its local groups because individuals did not join and receive membership cards in return for subscriptions. The members were those who supported the aims and work of NWEHPA and its local groups. Those opposed to the airport just participated in the activities and meetings of NWEHPA. At the local village or parish level there was little formal structure as opposition to the airport became, during these years, an integral part of the life of these villages. This informality fitted into the pattern of life in this rural area, and enabled NWEHPA to weld local opposition in each of these villages into a co-ordinated protest against the airport.

Strictly speaking, NWEHPA was the parent body which co-ordinated the efforts of the local groups in the towns, villages and parishes, which had been formed as a means through which that village, town or parish could contribute to the overall fight. In theory, NWEHPA's membership was these local groups, which had

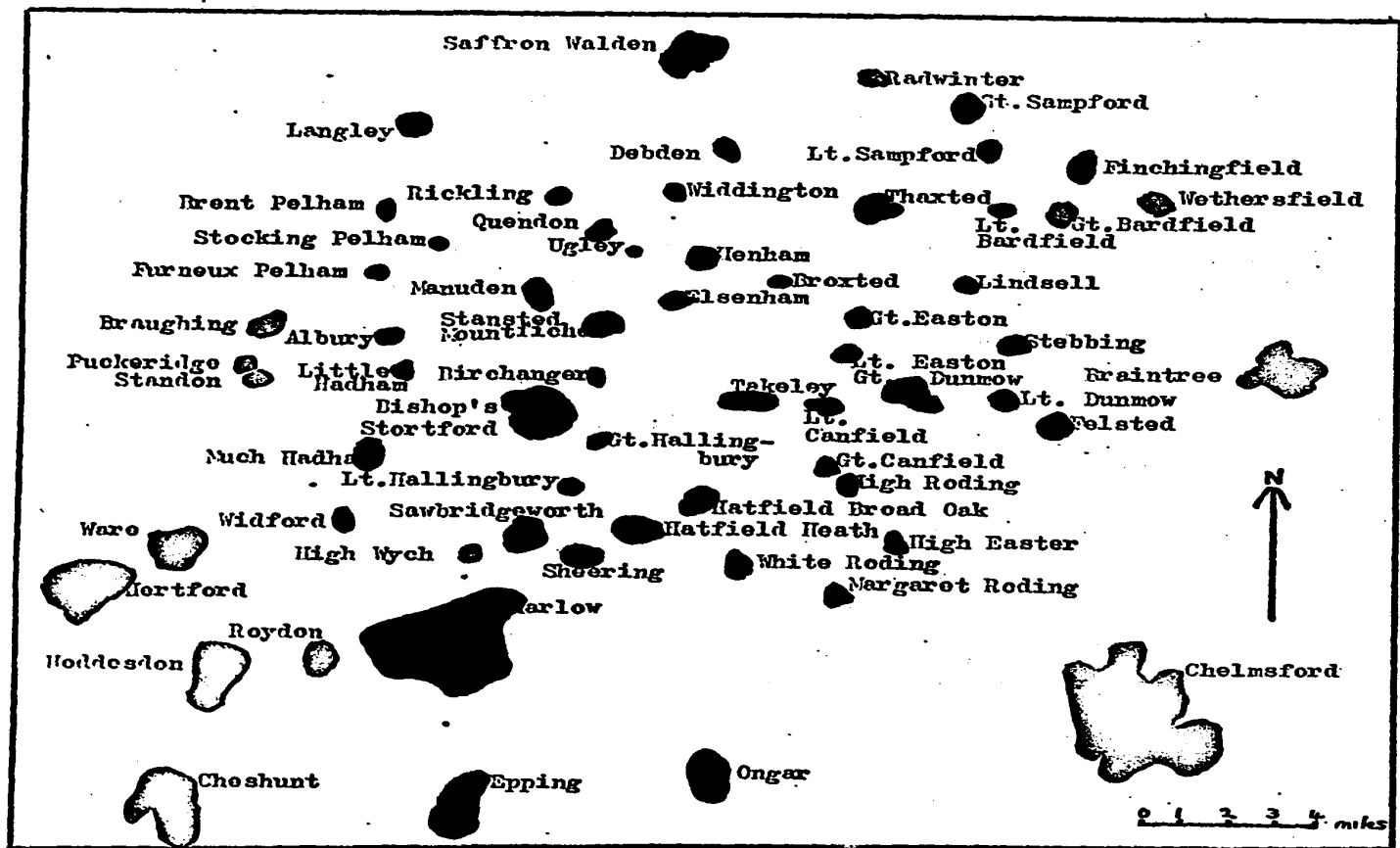
decided to contribute to and send representatives to NWEHPA's council. In addition, some other local groups which had not been formed specifically to fight the airport were associated with NWEHPA and some of them sent representatives to its council.¹ It was through the local town, village and parish groups that most people opposed to the airport participated. In all, approximately forty of these groups were formed during the controversy in the area surrounding Stansted airport.² It is difficult to know precisely the numbers of NWEHPA's membership, but they claimed to represent 13,300 people directly,³ the hard core of which were the members of the local committees in the towns, villages and parishes. According to NWEHPA leaders, their supporters included every type of person including farmers, farm workers, labourers, professional people, shopkeepers and businessmen, and they belonged to all political parties.⁴ They strongly denied that

1. These groups included for instance: Aythorpe Roding Parish Council, Bishop's Stortford Cricket Club, The Essex Hunt, Friends of Hatfield Forest, Henham Conservation Society, Saffron Walden Countryside Association and the Chelmsford Diocesan Authority. For full list see: Olive Cook, The Stansted Affair: A case for the people. London: Pan Books, 1967, pp. 127-128.

2. Map Three (p.172) shows the towns, villages and parishes within which some type of local protest group was operating. Some of these local groups covered more than one village at some stages of the controversy. For instance, the Pelhams were one group, and the Dunmow Preservation Association included both Great and Little Dunmow. Other groups recruited members from surrounding areas where local village groups had not been formed. For instance, the Harlow group had supporters who lived in Roydon and the Saffron Walden group had some who lived in Radwinter.

3. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, p. 13.

4. Interviews.



MAP THREE: The Stansted District showing the Towns and Villages with groups formed to fight the Airport and affiliated to the North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association.

their membership was limited to a small group of wealthy landowners and businessmen.¹ The important point about NWEHPA's membership was that they were able to gain the support of a large number of local people who were prepared to work and contribute to the fight against the airport because they felt strongly about the question. NWEHPA was thereby able to show that it had the support of a sizeable proportion of local people. This support was required to raise the needed funds.

The nature of NWEHPA's membership indicates that the protest was based upon the support of a wide range of local people who were brought together because they would be adversely affected by the airport. From the map it can be seen that most of the local protest groups were formed in the area surrounding the airport which is rural in character. These groups were more active and drew larger support than the local groups in the affected towns such as Harlow. This indicates that the essential ingredient of the NWEHPA organization was the support of the affected rural area. Without the strong, indeed

1. For instance, Sir Roger Hawkey, speaking at Broxted on the eve of the public inquiry, said: "Our Association represents thousands of people from all walks of life who are appalled at the proposed rape of this part of the Essex Countryside. The money which has been raised has been obtained mostly in shillings and sixpences and not in large sums."

Herts and Essex Observer, 10 December, 1965. Mr. John Lukies and Mrs. Susan Forsyth, in their discussions with this writer, stressed the wide range of local support which they had. Interviews. It is virtually impossible, given the informality with which much of their activity was conducted, to offer hard data upon their membership to ascertain the validity of their claims. But Mr. Newens, who is by his political views no friend of wealthy landowners and businessmen, also stressed that their support came from a broad spectrum of people and interests in the area. Interview.

militant, opposition that emanated from this area, NWEHHPA would have been a weak organization. But it is also clear from the involvement of the membership of the Councils and of the Councils themselves that it was not purely a rural protest, but rather a regional protest in which the rural protest was an essential core.¹

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

(1) Structure

The ability of the local pressure groups to undertake successful pressure group activity was enhanced by their organizational structure and arrangements which were appropriate for their aims and objectives. NWEHHPA created an organizational infrastructure which fitted its needs, while the Councils had this infrastructure which they needed to be able to act in this controversy.

The organizational structure and arrangements of NWEHHPA were based upon its aims and needs as a protest pressure group which had been set up to organize, co-ordinate and supplement the local opposition that was already emerging, and to present the best possible technical case against the proposals at the public inquiry. NWEHHPA needed to mobilize the people of the locality to provide many of the resources which it needed if it was to achieve its aims. These different needs and aims required different types of organizational structures.

1. The evidence of the involvement of the other local groups which was discussed in the previous chapter adds weight to this point that the basis of the protest was regional.

The mobilization need required an organization composed of grass roots groups based upon the individual communities of the locality, while the need for co-ordination, preparation of the technical case, and later the conduct of the campaign against the Government decision needed an organization that was centrally based and directed.

The two level organizational structure which was adopted and maintained by NWEHPA throughout the controversy suited these conflicting organizational needs. The grass roots organization was based upon anti-airport groups which had been formed in the towns, villages and parishes of the locality. In theory, these were independent groups affiliated to NWEHPA as the central co-ordinating body, but in practice all these groups were very closely tied into the organization, which could be seen as having a close degree of unity more like integral parts of one organization performing different tasks. The role of these local groups was to mobilize support from their local residents to raise the money needed by the central organization, and to maintain lines of communication between the central organization and their supporters. The role of the central organization was to prepare the technical case and then to present it to the relevant channels of influence on behalf of all the groups within NWEHPA. In addition, it was its task to co-ordinate and organize all activities which needed the support of more than one of the local groups, and to provide a voice to other people and organizations.¹

1. Interview (Mrs. S. Forsyth).

NWEEHPA's central organization, of which there were three major elements, reflected these different roles that it performed. First, there was the Council of the Association, whose membership included elected and co-opted members, and the nominated representatives of the local groups and some associated groups. The Council was responsible for setting the broad outlines of general policy and exercising a general control over the organization, and it performed a role as a co-ordinator and a channel of communication between the different elements of NWEEHPA which were represented formally and informally in its membership. Second, there was the Executive Committee whose membership included the Officers of the Association and other key individuals such as the Chairmen of the Committees, who were co-opted. It was responsible for the day to day running of the Association, and setting broad policy within the lines approved by the Council.¹ The Executive performed the role of leadership within the Association because it was the major decision-maker on matters concerning the use of their resources and the shape of the technical case.²

Third, there were the Committees of the Association, of which there were four, Finance, Technical Data, Hardship, and Publicity and Public Relations, which carried out detailed work in areas of major concern to NWEEHPA and who assisted the Executive. The

1. NWEEHPA, Monthly Bulletin, March 1965.

2. Interview, op. cit.

work undertaken by the Technical Data Committee contributed substantially to the success of NWEHPA. It was responsible for the selection of the specialists and experts who were employed by NWEHPA to assist in the preparation of the technical case and as expert witnesses at the public inquiry, and for the detailed consideration of all technical matters, such as Air Navigation, Airports and Aerial matters, Planning, Road and Rail Traffic, soil mechanics and general technical matters.¹ The result of its work were the detailed arguments and evidence which NWEHPA put forward on the technical issues involved. But their ability to be able to use technical experts would have been impossible without the successful fund-raising efforts which were the responsibility of the Finance Committee, who were also responsible for the day to day control and supervision of expenditure and in consultation with the treasurers of the local groups for the setting of targets for them to raise as their contribution to the overall financial effort.² The Publicity and Public Relations Committee was responsible for presenting the NWEHPA's case to the public, the production of publicity material, the placing of press adverts, and relations with the press.³ The Hardship Committee dealt with special cases of need

1. NWEHPA, Monthly Bulletin, March 1965. Special note ought to be made of the fact that they were concerned with all the aspects of the problem compared with the Ministry of Aviation and Government emphasis upon aviation matters as determining factors.

2. Interview.

3. Ibid.

of individuals who were affected by the proposals.¹

In addition to tackling these problems upon a systematic and continuing basis, NWEHPA maintained an office in a private house outside Dunmow. From April 1965 until after the public inquiry, NWEHPA had a paid full-time General Co-ordinator who was responsible for the running of the office, undertaking detailed administrative work and co-ordinating the activities of the different elements within NWEHPA, with the help of a secretary and other part-time secretarial assistance. This meant that the work of the organization was undertaken on a regular, permanent and co-ordinated basis. This was also important in the phase after the Government decision when it was mounting its part of the campaign against the Government decision. The office was re-activated with the appointment of a paid full-time General Organizer with a paid full-time secretary. Again it meant that during a crucial period there were full-time officials and an office which could be contacted by outsiders such as the Press on a regular basis.²

Another organizational factor of importance was NWEHPA's use of technical and legal experts, especially for the preparation and presentation of its cases to the inquiries. Their use enabled NWEHPA to present its case upon something like equal terms with the Ministry and the Government even though it did not command the resources of

1. NWEHPA, Monthly Bulletin, March 1965.

2. Interview.

the Government as far as technical experts and information were concerned. NWEHPA was determined to obtain the services of the best experts available so that they could be on reasonably equal terms with their opponents.¹ For instance, they hired top London solicitors to act for them as legal advisers,² while they retained Mr. Peter Boydell, Q.C., as Counsel for NWEHPA for the Public Inquiry and again for the local inquiry stage of the Roskill Commission. They also appointed an honorary Adviser on Finance,³ and expert technical advisers covering aviation, town and country planning, agriculture, engineering and construction, rail access, soil and noise.⁴ By January 1969, for the

1. To do this they adopted the attitude that no expense would be spared in that direction, and that they would find the money to meet those expenses. Interviews.

2. Messrs. Allen and Overy, who are listed by Anthony Sampson as one of the four partnerships that dominate the City of London. See, Anthony Sampson, Anatomy of Britain Today. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1966, p. 165.

3. He was a senior partner in Price, Waterhouse and Co. who are listed by Anthony Sampson as one of the four major partnerships of accountants in the City of London. Ibid, p. 523.

4. The technical experts employed by NWEHPA included Mr. R.E. Sadler, an Engineering Consultant to British Rail, who was the chief co-ordinator of the technical case; Mr. Lewis Keeble, then President of the Town and Country Planning Institute and senior lecturer in town planning at London University, for town and country planning; Mr. Alan Stratford, a fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, on general aviation matters; Captain James Percy, Senior BOAC pilot until his retirement in November 1964, on air traffic; Mr. Alec Leggatt, a partner in the firm of Nacshen, Croft and Leggatt, on engineering and construction problems; Mr. Harold Hutchings, for eleven years General Superintendent (Traffic) for London Transport, on rail access problems; and Professor Elfyn Richards, Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the University of Southampton and Director of the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research, on noise. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., pp. 14-15; NWEHPA, Studies for the Site for a Third London Airport, op. cit.; NWEHPA, Monthly Bulletin, October 1965.

local inquiry stage of the Roskill Commission they had hired experts upon regional planning and amenity problems, air traffic control and airport problems, and rail access.¹

At the local level, the local affiliated groups had their own organization which was centered around the village, parish or town committee that had been elected by the local people who attended its meetings. These groups had their own Chairmen, Secretaries and Treasurers and committee members who were responsible for organizing and carrying out activities in the village, parish or town as part of the overall fight against the airport. In addition, these groups had a representative whom they sent to NWEHPA's Council and who kept the village in touch with the overall effort.²

The County Councils were permanent organizations which undertook a wide range of delegated local government responsibilities which included town and country planning and education. The organizational structure and arrangements of the County Councils were based upon three elements. First, there was the full Council, the members of which were elected County Councillors. The full Council set the general lines of policy and approved the actions and plans of the Council's

1. These included Professor Peter Hall, Professor of Town and Country Planning at Reading University to deal with regional planning and amenity; Mr. J.W.S. Brancker, the Public Inquiry technical assessor on aviation; and Mr. J. Margetts, who was until November 1968 the member of the British Rail Board in charge of traffic operations, on rail access. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 January, 1969.

2. Interviews.

Committees. These Committees, which were the second element, were responsible for detailed policy and administrative control, and in this case in both counties the County Planning Committee was the most concerned, as they were responsible for and had to approve most development within their areas. The third element were the permanent administrative and technical officials and experts who carried out the policy and decisions of the full Council and its Committees. Both County Councils were able to draw upon resources of officials and experts to prepare and present their cases. For instance, Essex County Council had a team of officers who under Mr. Mills, the Deputy Clerk, were directly concerned with working upon the questions involved and working with the outside experts employed by the Council. As permanent bodies concerned with planning questions they were able to draw upon their knowledge and experience from other cases for their approach to this case.

The organizational structure of the local Councils was similar to that of the County Councils. They had a full Council, of elected Councillors, which decided the general policy, and among the smaller councils often many of the administrative details as well. They also had committees to carry out detailed work on particular questions, and most of them had a special committee dealing with the airport at some stage of the controversy which advised the Council on the issues involved and upon the policy and approach that they should adopt. They also maintained a permanent staff but did not have the resources of

technical staff or information which the county councils could command, nor in most cases did they have the financial resources to employ outside experts. For these reasons, they tended to associate themselves with their county council, which had also decided to oppose the airport for reasons with which the local councils were in full agreement and which had greater resources with which to oppose the airport. The local Councils felt that it was better not to duplicate the efforts of their county council and thereby waste the money of the ratepayers. Rather they decided to concentrate their resources upon dealing with their special problems in regard to the airport proposals.

(2) Internal Decision-Making

The internal decision-making processes of the local pressure groups in this case served to aid rather than hinder their ability to act because the way in which decisions were taken, and the extent of agreement in favour of opposition to the development of the airport achieved, enabled them successfully to undertake pressure group activity. The consensus reached inside all the local pressure groups enabled their leaders to undertake actions on behalf of the particular local pressure group without their every move being subjected to close scrutiny beforehand. In fact, internal decision-making processes, as they worked in this case, gave practically complete freedom of action to their leadership. Much of the decision-making undertaken by bodies like the full Council of the Councils or NWEHPA's Council was to

give a rubber stamp of approval to the decisions of the leadership of the local pressure group. This situation was possible perhaps because there was a consensus upon opposition to the airport and upon the action needed in most of the local pressure groups. Inside the local pressure group the leadership played an important part in deciding the actions that should be undertaken by the group.

Decision-making inside NWEHPA was relatively simple because all those involved sought to achieve the same objectives. There was frequently a consensus in decision-making. There was no need for the decision-makers to be concerned about opposition from the membership as they were all fighting the same cause, and because NWEHPA's leaders were seen by their supporters as the most effective means that they had in fighting the development of the airport. Decision-making inside NWEHPA was in the hands of a small number of people. Major decisions of policy about the deployment of their resources and of strategy and tactics were taken by the Executive Committee. Many other decisions within the general lines of the policy decided by the Executive Committee were taken by individuals or committees. Indeed, individuals and committees which were composed of the members of the Executive Committee played an important part in internal decision-making inside NWEHPA. For instance, many of the decisions concerning the shape and contents of the technical case to be presented to the public inquiry were taken by the Technical Data Committee or

Sir John Elliot.¹ Sir John Elliot and this committee directed the work of NWEHPA's legal and technical advisers. In the early stages therefore, when the shape of their technical case was being determined, Sir John Elliot played a crucial role in guiding NWEHPA onto the course it was to take prior to and during the public inquiry. Sir John Elliot, who had long experience in public transport administration, was not the only individual to play a crucial leadership role inside NWEHPA. The joint Chairmen, Sir Roger Hawkey, a London businessman, and Mr. John Lukies, a local farmer and Councillor, played an extremely important part in decision-making inside the organization as many decisions were taken by them within the general framework set by the Executive. Both, as were many other members of the executive, were extremely active on behalf of NWEHPA. The activity undertaken by them and other leaders enabled NWEHPA to operate effectively as a protest pressure group.

Decision-making inside the Essex County Council revolved around the County Planning Committee which was responsible for the detailed consideration of this issue and its implications, and the full Council which set the general policy and approach of Essex on this issue on the basis of the recommendations of the County Planning Committee. Initial consideration of the issue was undertaken by the County Planning Committee which employed consultants to advise them about all those issues which the Committee felt that they had to investi-

1. Interviews.

gate fully before they took their stand for or against the airport.¹ In April 1965, after full consideration of the issues, the County Planning Committee adopted a recommendation for presentation to the full Council that Essex County Council should oppose the development of the airport at Stansted.² This was adopted at the April Council meeting by 76 votes to 5, in a debate which showed the virtual unanimity of view within the Council.³

The important point about decision-making inside the Essex County Council was that the Council was virtually unanimous in its opposition to the airport. In the period before April 1965, the major dissent from the majority view came from the Councillors who represented the most affected areas and who then, before the Council made its decision, wanted it to oppose the airport.⁴ After the decision was taken to oppose the airport, decision-making was left virtually in the

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 8 January, 1965.

2. Braintree and Witham Times, 9 April, 1965.

3. Harlow Gazette, 16 April, 1965. The five Labour Members who opposed the motion did so not because they were in favour of the airport but because they thought that the Council had then not gathered enough evidence upon which to make a decision to oppose the airport. Ibid. Other Labour Members, such as Lord Leatherland, were strongly opposed to the development of the airport. Herts and Essex Observer, 16 April, 1965.

4. For instance, in January 1965, Alderman S.S. Wilson (Labour) of Saffron Walden asked the Council to lead the opposition to the airport proposals. (Herts and Essex Observer, 8 January, 1965). In March, Councillors D.L. Anderson (Labour - Harlow), Mrs. E.W. Borthwick (Conservative - Bardfield), and Mrs. Rowena Davey (Conservative - Dunmow) also protested the lack of action on the issue by the County Planning Committee and the Council. Harlow Gazette, 5 March, 1965.

hands of the County Planning Committee working with their officials, although their actions and expenditures eventually needed to be approved by the full Council. In this case this involved no debates or opposition. This meant that speedy decisions could be made upon action to be undertaken and, for instance, enabled the County Council through Brigadier Collins, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, to take the lead in establishing the political campaign against the Government decision for Stansted in May 1967 without waiting for a full Council meeting to gain approval.¹ Brigadier Collins, together with the Planning Committee, was able to do this because they were working within the mandate to oppose the airport, and because there was substantial agreement inside the Council.² This freedom of action enabled the County Planning Committee, together with the Council's officials, to mobilize the Council's resources and to organize and undertake its opposition to the airport.

In Hertfordshire County Council, internal decision-making was similar but less clear cut than that in Essex, at least initially. The dominant element in decision-making within the Council was the County

1. Interview (Mr. J.S. Mills).

2. If there had been substantial opposition inside the Council to opposing the airport, or if the County Planning Committee itself had been divided in such a way that made decisions difficult, the freedom of the County Planning Committee and of its Chairman to act would have been reduced because of the need to anticipate opposition inside the Council. Instead, as the situation developed, his hand and that of the Committee was strengthened because they spoke for all the members of the Council in opposing the Government.

Planning Committee, which was left to consider the issue during 1964 and 1965, while making periodic reports to the full Council. They adopted the position of attempting to negotiate a satisfactory layout of the airport with the Ministry and of employing consultants to study the noise problem, which they considered was the major issue for Hertfordshire.¹ They considered that the airport might be acceptable if they were able to gain a satisfactory alignment of the runways which would solve the noise problem.² The County, they felt, could not object to the proposals as a planning authority, since the airport was not located in their area. Any decision to oppose or support the airport had to be based upon the results of their contacts with the Ministry and the reports of their noise consultants.³ The full Council decided to oppose the airport, on the recommendation of the Planning Committee, in November 1965, mainly because of the adverse noise effects that the County would suffer.⁴ Within this Council there was little dissent from the majority view which accepted the position of the Planning Committee, as the issue did not directly concern most Councillors. But those Councillors who represented the directly affected areas in the less populated eastern part of the county wanted

1. Hertfordshire Mercury, 24 November, 1964.

2. Ibid., 26 February, 1965.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 30 July, 1965.

4. Hertfordshire Mercury, 26 November, 1965.

the Council to take a position that was strongly opposed to the airport.¹

Once the decision had been taken to oppose the airport, the County Planning Committee continued to oppose the airport with increasing intensity after the Government decision for Stansted. Their attitude and that of the Council was now the same as that of the Essex County Council, but the way in which decisions were reached was still less clear cut because, for example, even though there was no disagreement in the Council over opposing the airport, it was not until the June Council meeting that they decided to join in the campaign against the Government decision. This Council meeting unanimously voted against the development of Stansted and called for a reconsideration of the Government decision.² The Hertfordshire County Council was less well organized initially than the Essex County Council because its leaders upon this issue, the County Planning Committee and its Chairman, Major A.J. Hughes, had taken a less decisive position on the

1. The most vocal of these was Miss L.A.M. Lloyd Taylor (Conservative - Sawbridgeworth), who as early as November 1964 expressed her unease about the 'half-hearted' attitude of the Planning Committee. Hertfordshire Mercury, 24 November, 1964. Her unease became more vocal as time went by because in July 1965 she argued, with support from Alderman C.W. Randall (Bishop's Stortford), that they were concerned as a planning authority as the airport would bring development into the county. Alderman Randall considered that "our County Council is lax in not supporting Essex which has come out very strongly against the airport at Stansted." He was disappointed that they were not "getting more support from the county council in the resistance to what I think is an impractical airport." Herts and Essex Observer, 30 July, 1965.

2. Hertfordshire Mercury, 2 June, 1967.

issue. It was only when the Planning Committee with the approval of the full Council took a stand against the airport that Hertfordshire began to organize themselves actively against the airport.

In the local Councils decisions were made by the full Council acting upon the advice of either standing or special airport committees. In all the local Councils there was little opposition to the Council adopting a stand against the airport, though there was a minority of individuals who disagreed.¹ Indeed, in some Councils decisions were unanimous.² Dunmow RDC was one of the most directly affected Councils. Initially they set up a special committee, the membership of which included the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Standing Committees, including Mr. John Lukies, and representatives of the most affected villages, to consider the airport proposals and subsequent developments immediately.³ The report of this Committee was discussed when the Council debated the issue of the airport in August 1964. It rejected a motion, by 20 votes to 2 with 6 abstentions, supporting the development of the airport and passed one which opposed its development.⁴ In February 1965, they decided

1. For instance, the Saffron Walden RDC voted 31 for and 3 against a motion to oppose the airport. (Herts and Essex Observer, 9 October, 1964.

2. For example, the Sawbridgeworth UDC decision to petition Parliament, (Harlow Citizen, 3 November, 1967) and the Braughing RDC decision to petition Parliament, (Herts and Essex Observer, 15 December, 1967).

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 19 June, 1964.

4. Essex Chronicle, 4 September, 1964.

by 22 votes to 5 to contribute £1,100 to NWEEHPA in return for the use of NWEEHPA's technical information in the preparation of their own case.¹ In May 1965, this special committee became a permanent Airport Committee which had responsibility for dealing with the airport question in detail until it was disbanded in 1969.² The Council was able to come to decisions without much opposition which enabled its Committee and officials to act quickly on its behalf. The situation inside Dunmow RDC was similar to that inside other Councils. The consensus which prevailed in most of these Councils enabled their airport committees and their officials to mobilize the council's resources and to undertake opposition to the airport without being hamstrung by lack of clear cut decisions.³

(3) Leadership

An examination of the leadership of the local pressure groups indicates that their leadership was drawn from a cross section of the local community. This shows that the opposition to the airport was a regional protest, with a strong rural element through NWEEHPA and the local Councils in the immediately affected rural area around Stansted. Another important element was that many of these leaders

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 19 February, 1968.

2. Interview (Mr. A.J. Little).

3. Dunmow RDC was a case where internal decision-making was clear cut because the Council's area was directly affected. In other less affected councils the process of reaching a decision to oppose the airport took longer and was more complex. But in most cases this did not hinder the ability of the council to oppose the airport.

of this local community had connections either through their occupations or friendships in London which were of use to the local pressure groups in undertaking pressure group activity. In fact, this area which is about 30-40 miles from central London, contains many individuals who work in London and live in the countryside by choice.

The following Tables indicate that both at the central and local level that NWEHPA, through its leadership, was well placed locally and nationally to undertake local/national protest pressure group activity. Its leadership included individuals who were leading members of the community by virtue of being Councillors elected to represent the local people on a particular Council or by virtue of the fact that they held office in some other local group which brought them into contact with other people in the local community. Table Three shows that both centrally (Executive and Council) and locally (Committees of the local NWEHPA groups) that there were a number of individuals who were elected councillors or officers of other groups. Table Four indicates that there was a fair cross section of the local community represented in NWEHPA's leadership when their occupations are examined. The leadership, as far as can be seen from the available data, did not have a strong representation from the working class sections of the community. There was therefore a predominance of the middle and upper middle class in the leadership of NWEHPA.¹

1. The sources used for this thesis, local newspapers and selected interviews with key actors, are such that detailed empirical data on social composition of the leadership and the members of the local pressure groups is not ascertainable. The resources available to the author in his research were such that other methods, such as surveys, which could yield much important data on this point, were beyond the scope of this thesis. This is an area of the whole controversy in which further research ought to be done, especially as the trend in the study of British politics has moved to study politics at the local level.

TABLE THREE: NWEHPA Leaders who were known to be Councillors and Leaders of other local groups.^a

	Executive	Council	Executive + Council	Local Groups ^b	Total
Total	19	51	70	138	208
Councillors:-					
County	0	2	2	1	3
District	3	6	9	6	15
Parish	0	5	5	11	16
Other Groups	1	5	6	15	21

Source: Interviews and local Newspapers.

TABLE FOUR: Occupations of NWEHPA Leadership

Occupation	Executive	Council	Executive + Council	Local Groups ^b	Total
Farmer	2	11	13	10	23
Housewife	4	9	13	14	27
Retired	1	1	2	7	9
Professions	5	8	13	10	23
Shopkeeper	0	2	2	2	4
Business	6	4	10	3	13
Industry	0	1	1	2	3
Trades	0	3	3	0	3
Trade Unionist	1	0	1	0	1
Office Workers	0	1	1	1	2
Local Govt. Officers	0	0	0	1	1
Do Not Know	0	11	11	88	99
TOTAL	19	51	70	138	208

Source: Ascertained from Interviews and local Newspapers.

- a. The figures indicate the numbers of Councillors and leaders of other local groups that were easily established through the interviews and local newspaper reports on the Stansted issue, and should therefore be seen as minimum figures.
- b. Members of NWEHPA's local groups who were not also members of the Executive and Council.

NOTE ON TABLES: These tables are only of limited value because they are based upon incomplete information, but are included because they serve to indicate in very crude terms the nature of NWEHPA's leadership. To have established exact empirical data would have required research involving a much wider reading of the local newspapers than the Stansted issue and more interviewing than was undertaken, and these were outside the scope of this thesis. The purpose was not to establish empirical data upon individual participation in the controversy but to study the activity of the pressure groups as groups.

In the Executive Committee, the leaders of the local community included Mr. John Lukies, a joint Chairman of NWEHPA, who was a leading local farmer and a longstanding member of and a former Chairman of the Dunmow RDC, as well as a local Magistrate. Other leaders of the local community on the Executive included Mr. Tom Sharrock, a trade unionist, who was for many years a member of the Bishop's Stortford UDC, and Mrs. Tetley Jones who became a Councillor on Dunmow RDC, Mr. E.R. Taylor, who was a headmaster of a school in Bishop's Stortford, and Mrs. R. Lawrence, who was the wife of a leading local builder. Other members of the Executive Committee had national connections. The most important of these was Sir John Elliot, the chairman of the Technical Data Committee, who was Chairman of Thomas Cook and Son (the travel firm) and who had had a long career in Railway Administration including several years as the Chairman of London Transport.¹ Sir George Binney² and Sir Roger Hawkey,³ the other joint Chairman of NWEHPA, were London businessmen, while Mr. S.M. Herbert was a former Foreign News Editor for the News Chronicle who was then working for a London Publishing firm and Mr. Gordon Simmons knew several members of the House of Lords.⁴ These individuals brought to the Executive Committee a knowledge and experi-

1. Who's Who 1966. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966, p. 941.

2. Ibid., p. 259.

3. Ibid., p. 1365.

4. Interviews.

ence gained by virtue of their positions in the community and their occupations which could serve NWEHPA in its efforts to mobilize local support and in its attempts to use the channels of influence.

This knowledge and experience was supplemented at the central level by members of the Council, many of whom were also members of local groups. It included a number of councillors and leaders of other local groups which increased NWEHPA's contacts throughout the local area.¹ These included Mr. G.C.S. Curtis who was an Essex County Councillor (Thaxted), a Councillor on and later Chairman of Saffron Walden RDC, and Chairman of the Essex Farmers' Union (NFU), Mrs. Rowena Davey who was an Essex County Councillor (Dunmow) and a member of Dunmow RDC, Mrs. B. Muir who was a Dunmow RDC Councillor and Chairman of Takeley Parish Council. Others who were Parish Councillors included Mr. C.R. Hockley, the chairman of Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council, Mr. P. Lindsell, a Debden Parish Councillor and Mr. B.J. Halliwell, a Stansted Parish Councillor. Others by virtue of their occupations had local contacts such as vicars, doctors, and shopkeepers, while others brought experience from jobs in London as lawyers, businessmen, or members of other professions to the aid of NWEHPA.²

As can be seen from Tables Three and Four, the pattern also applies among the local groups of NWEHPA. For instance, the Thaxted

1. See Table Three, p. 192 above.

2. See Table Four, p. 192 above.

Committee included members of the local Liberal, Labour and Conservative Parties, members of the Parish Council, the Parochial Church Council, the British Legion, the Women's Institute, the Horticultural Society, the Farmers' Union, the Young Farmers' Club and the Women's Voluntary Service.¹

The pattern was similar with the members of the Councils, who were, by virtue of their election, leaders of their communities. Their occupations included farmers, businessmen, and housewives. In addition to the Councillors already mentioned, others had special contacts or positions which they could use and these included Mr. E.C. Metson, the Secretary of the Stansted, Thaxted and Dunmow Branch of the NFU, who was a Dunmow RDC Councillor, Mr. Horace Juniper, a farmer who was a member of the local NFU and Chairman of Dunmow RDC. On the national level, Lord Leatherland, an Essex County Alderman, was an active member of the House of Lords who was strongly opposed to Stansted.²

The important determinant of the attitudes and the activity of these leaders of the local pressure groups as individuals seems to have been attachment to the region and especially to the rural area, which was under threat with the proposal to develop a major international airport in the centre of an unspoiled rural area. This points to the possibility that regional feeling is, in fact, an important part

1. Airport Opposition Committee (Thaxted). Leaflet, December, 1964.

2. Who's Who, op. cit., p. 1780.

of the British political culture even within areas that are not distant from London.

(4) Financial Resources

The County Councils and NWEHPA had or created the financial resources needed to undertake pressure group activity upon a wide scale, but lack of financial resources was a limiting factor upon the activity of the local Councils. The Councils raised money through the rates which were levied upon the local ratepayers, while NWEHPA raised its funds through its own fund-raising activities which were supported by local people. The County Councils, through the money raised by the rates, had the financial resources needed to undertake the preparation and presentation of technical cases to the inquiries and other pressure group activity.¹ The limiting factor for them was the need for expenditure to be approved by the full Council and the priorities that they attached to financing opposition to the airport as against other activities. In neither of the County Councils was there any debate over spending the needed money in this direction once the Council had decided to oppose the airport. In June 1967, the Essex County Council Emergency Committee approved the expenditures of £5,000 for the opposition to Stansted,² and later in April 1968, £10,000 was voted

1. Although County Councils do receive subsidies from the Central Government both of a general and a specific nature, this made no difference to the Stansted case because both these County Councils were able to raise the needed money through their own source of money, the rates.

2. Evening Standard, 14 June, 1967.

towards the cost of preparing a case for the Roskill Commission.¹

The local Councils had much smaller financial resources than the County Councils, which limited their ability to prepare elaborate technical cases using extensive technical evidence. This lack of financial resources is one of the reasons which accounts for them playing a less active and less elaborate role in opposing the airport compared with either NWEHPA or the County Councils, and why they tended to associate themselves with the cases or efforts of their County Council and limit their own activity to dealing with their special problems and supporting their County Council.

NWEHPA on the other hand could not depend upon any financial resources except those which it raised itself through its supporters, who played an extremely important role in fund-raising inside NWEHPA. In fact, fund-raising was one of the major aspects of NWEHPA's work throughout the controversy and especially when they were preparing for the inquiries, as money was needed for the use of the experts. NWEHPA's fund-raising was undertaken locally through its local groups, whose major responsibility was raising money, and through NWEHPA itself.²

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 April, 1968.

2. The fund-raising efforts were undertaken both centrally and locally. In the village of Takeley, for instance, an initial target of £500 was set, Herts and Essex Observer, 28 August, 1964. This target was easily raised and exceeded several times so that by November 1965 the sum raised approached £2,000, Hertfordshire Mercury, 12 November, 1965. This money was raised by a house to house collection in the village, a donation from the Parish Council, a Christmas draw, parties, dance and barbecue and a Christmas bazaar. Similar activity was going on in other villages where money was raised through coffee mornings, whist drives, wine and cheese parties, the opening of private gardens to view, together with jumble sales, fashion shows and stalls at local fêtes. Centrally money was raised through an auction sale in May 1965, which realized £1,115, Herts and Essex Observer, 21 May, 1965, another auction sale in November 1967 which raised £850, ibid, 24 November, 1967, a special

It is difficult to ascertain the exact financial income of NWEHPA, as no detailed public figures are available. There can be no doubt that a considerable sum was raised in the period of the controversy, and by March 1969 it was in the region of £50,000.¹ When compared with the financial resources available to other pressure groups of comparable size both locally and nationally, the financial resources of NWEHPA were considerable. In raising this money, NWEHPA was fortunate to be operating in a relatively prosperous part of the country where unemployment was very low.² By the time of the public inquiry £23,500 had been raised which they calculated came from over 13,000 supporters mostly in small sums. There were three subscriptions of £500, one of £400 from a seriously affected business and a handful of £100 subscriptions.³ In addition Dunmow RDC contributed £1,100 for the use of NWEHPA's technical information.⁴ They were able to raise these sums of money because the local people felt strongly about

fork luncheon in May 1968 which raised over £2,000, *ibid.*, 17 May, 1968, an art exhibition in London, a fashion show in Saffron Walden, a letter in the Daily Telegraph, which raised over £300 from people outside the Stansted area (Interviews) and collections at meetings, one of which at Much Hadham raised £230, Hertfordshire Mercury, 12 November, 1965.

1. Interviews.

2. It is doubtful if many other areas of the country, and certainly very few outside the South East of England would have been able to raise this sum of money from a comparable area.

3. NWEHPA, Studies for the Site of a Third London Airport, *op. cit.*

4. NWEHPA stressed that this was not a gift, as some asserted, but a case of the Council paying for technical information. This point was made clearly by the NWEHPA Treasurer, Mr. E.L. Judson, at the NWEHPA Annual General Meeting in March 1965, Herts and Essex Observer, 26 March, 1965.

the question and were prepared to contribute financially in an effort to defend their way of life. In a sense NWEEHPA was an investment in a peaceful future in this area for many individuals. Many individuals also felt financially threatened as their property would lose its value and as a result they would lose money. In addition, this money was raised because NWEEHPA placed great emphasis upon fund-raising and its organization which involved central direction and grass roots groups was ideally suited to this fund-raising operation, as individuals in local communities became involved in fund-raising.

The expenditure of this money raised reflected the strategy adopted by NWEEHPA during the different phases of the controversy, with the emphasis upon the use of expert advisers. At the time of the opening of the public inquiry, the Treasurer gave some indication of how the money was being spent. Nearly three quarters of the money spent to this time had been employed for the preparation of the case for the public inquiry. Legal expenses accounted for £7,000 while the technical experts and consultants had cost £8,000. Most of the remainder of the money spent had been used for the Secretariat. This accounted for £4,500, while very little was spent on publicity.¹ In March 1968, the Treasurer announced that £26,500 had been raised. The expenditure, which he then outlined, reflected the change in emphasis from preparing a technical case for a public inquiry to the pursuit of a political campaign. Their legal expenses had only risen to £7,500. The

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 December, 1965.

greatest increase was in the expenditure upon publicity which now accounted for £3,000 of the money spent. It is also clear that they continued to use technical experts as expenditure in this category had risen to £10,000. Secretarial and administrative expenses now accounted for £6,000.¹ For the Roskill Inquiry, a target of £15,000 was set. Again their intention was to spend the overwhelming proportion of this sum upon the use of technical and legal advisers to prepare their case for presentation to the Roskill Commission.

(5) Other Resources

The local pressure groups, especially NWEHPA and the County Councils acquired a considerable technical information on the issues involved in the question of the airport which enabled them to argue their case on the technical level against the Government's technical experts. Their ability to be able to do this and to undermine the Government case for Stansted on technical grounds enabled them to raise doubts about the Government's handling of the issue, which gave them important political leverage in the period following the Government decision.

(6) Mobilization Potential

The local pressure groups in this case had a high mobilization potential. The Councils needed only Council or Committee decisions to act, and as was shown earlier, the internal decision-making pro-

1. Braintree and Witham Times, 1 March, 1968.

cesses inside the Councils enabled them to take action quickly. NWEHPA's internal decision-making processes and organizational structure enabled them to mobilize into action effectively. They were also able to mobilize local people to work for or support them because there was considerable unrest over this issue in the affected area and because most of the area, in which they were operating, was a tightly knit rural community in which there was close individual contact and a strong sense of community, particularly in response to an external threat such as the airport.

POLITICAL RESOURCES

Much of the success of the local pressure groups depended upon their mastery of and ability to communicate on the technical issues involved and their ability to mobilize their resources and the local people behind their opposition to the airport. But these factors by themselves were not sufficient to ensure the success of the local pressure groups. The nature of the community in which they were based was a major contributory factor to their successful pressure group activity. This community, besides being largely a rural area, was near London. The area was one where a large number of wealthier commuters lived. They had useful political contacts or other experience which could be brought to bear in pressure group activity, especially in the political campaign. As a result, the leadership of the local pressure groups contained people with these national political

and other contacts. In addition, other individuals who were not leaders of the local pressure groups but who had these types of contacts or experience became involved in the controversy because they were residents of the affected area. For instance, these people included Lord Plowden and Mrs. Renée Short, MP. Lord Plowden played an important part in the controversy, though not in public, by contacting and seeking support from his colleagues in the House of Lords. He was also instrumental in bringing in Lord Dilhorne, a former Conservative Lord Chancellor, who was to become a leading opponent of Stansted in the Lords while working closely with the Stansted Working Party.¹ Also the activities of Lord Butler, the former MP for Saffron Walden, who wrote to The Times and spoke in the Lords against the development of the airport, gave the local pressure groups powerful and influential support.

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL PRESSURE GROUPS

The overall objective, which the local pressure groups adopted from their different positions, was to prevent the development of Stansted as the Third London Airport. NWEHPA had been formed specifically to fight the airport proposals, while the Councils adopted this objective after considering the probable effects of the airport upon their responsibilities and policies. This overall objective was adopted in response to Government intentions to develop Stansted as the Third

1. Interviews.

London Airport. The nature of their overall objective, which was one of protest against the Government's intentions and actions, made pressure group activity in this case a response to Government actions and decision-making. This meant that Government actions and decision-making were a major determining influence upon the nature of pressure group activity undertaken at the different stages of the controversy.

ATTITUDES OF THE LOCAL PRESSURE GROUPS

The attitudes of the local pressure groups affected their behaviour in the controversy. Their attitudes were developed in response to other actors and influences. The initial and major influences on the attitudes of the local pressure groups were the Ministry of Aviation and the Government with their proposals and decisions, and the decision-making process as it operated in this case. The Councils, especially the Essex County Council, also developed their attitudes to this issue out of their experience and responsibilities as local government authorities. Their attitudes also developed in response to ideas put forward by other groups and individuals including their expert advisers. They developed underlying attitudes towards the issue involved in the location of the site for the Third London Airport and towards decision-making in this case. These attitudes served as the reference point against which they judged Government proposals and decisions throughout the controversy and determined their own actions in response to these Government proposals and decisions. Their attitudes were reinforced as they responded to

events and the actions of other actors. The result of this was that in the end all the local pressure groups, including those which had not been strongly opposed in the beginning, ultimately became very strongly opposed to the development of Stansted as the Third London Airport without the fullest possible investigation into the whole issue. Their behaviour was affected by their attitude towards the issue of the Third London Airport, towards decision-making as it was undertaken in this case and also to a much lesser degree by their attitudes to pressure group activity by themselves.

... Their attitudes to these different points were similar though not exactly the same because of the different positions from which they approached the controversy. But their approach was for the most part to define and develop their attitudes upon the issue in terms of the national interest rather than purely in terms of the local interest, even when the issue was primarily one of the particular site of Stansted. By considering the issue as one of national rather than local concern, they were able to fight the proposals within a framework of arguments based upon the national context rather than the local one. In this way, the attitudes which they developed were a contributory factor to their success because by viewing the issue in national rather than local terms they were able to challenge the Government on its own ground as the supposed representative of the national interest.

a) Attitudes towards the issue of the Third London Airport

The natural reaction of the local people around Stansted to the prospect that a major international airport would be built in their midst and that their way of life in this rural area destroyed was to wish that it would be placed somewhere else so that they could be left in peace and quiet.¹ This emotional reaction, which consisted of opposition to the destruction of their way of life and to the intolerable noise which they would suffer, provided the stimulus for the formation of the local groups which were to become part of NWEHPA,² and provided throughout the controversy the basic attitudes of NWEHPA's supporters in the affected district to the question of the development of the airport. This protest by people of this rural area who wanted to preserve their way of life and conserve the essential rural character of the district provided an essential ingredient and underpinning to the regional nature of the opposition to the airport.

1. The most affected area immediately around the airport was a rural area. But other urban and semi-urban areas such as Bishop's Stortford and Harlow would also be severely affected. The protest was therefore not entirely one of rural area even though this rural area provided the backbone of the NWEHPA organization.

2. The people of Takeley thought "that the proposed development of Stansted as the Third London Airport is totally unacceptable, and the Ministry is urged to initiate urgent research to find an acceptable alternative." Braintree, Witham, Dunmow Herald, 5 August, 1964. The villagers of Great Hallingbury were opposed to the development because "it entirely ignores the interests of the people who have chosen to make their homes in the area; and entails the loss of a large area of the most fertile land in the country merely to suit the convenience of the travelling public whose needs would be served just as well by an airport in a less productive area elsewhere and where fewer people would be adversely affected." Herts and Essex Observer, 14 August, 1964.

This emotional reaction, which was one of 'No to Stansted', was an important ingredient in NWEHPA's attitudes and its local appeal. But this was only a part of the attitudes of NWEHPA's leadership who also, partly because of its national connections, saw the issue in national terms.¹ They demanded that if there had to be an airport at Stansted then they had to be shown fairly that their sacrifice was necessary. "The Association does not say: Put the airport anywhere as long as it is not on top of us. It does say: The airport policy chosen must be demonstrated to be right if sacrifices are to be called for in the national interest."² The question was not a purely local one but rather a national one which had to be properly considered in that context before Stansted was developed because "the siting of an international airport in a small country such as ours, bearing in mind the intolerable inconveniences involved is not a local or even a county matter, but a national problem."³

1. The local reaction which wanted to preserve the local countryside was also paralleled at the national level where in Britain land use and preservation of the countryside have been matters of national concern because of the shortage of land in Britain. This shortage provided a major reason for the strict town and country planning and development procedures that have been adopted since the Second World War, and in the operation of which the County Councils play an important role. This meant that there was a tie between local feelings in this case and national needs which were recognized even by the Government who wanted to preserve green belts and countryside around the major conurbations such as London. The Stansted area provided one of the few remaining areas of open countryside around London. The policy adopted by the local councils, with Government approval and indeed encouragement, was to preserve the essential rural character of this area.

2. NWEHPA, The Stansted Black Book, op. cit., Frontispiece.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 28 August, 1964.

NWEEHPA's leaders very early adopted the attitude that Stansted was not a problem which could be considered in isolation, but one that should be considered in the context of the overall need for airports and other problems such as noise effects upon the local inhabitants, the problems of agriculture and of planning. Aviation considerations were only a few of the problems that had to be taken into account rather than the determining factors. This basic attitude which prevailed throughout the controversy was that Stansted had to be considered in the context of an overall investigation into the question. There had to be a full and fair inquiry in which they had had full opportunity to put their case against the airport at Stansted. If it could be shown in a full and fair inquiry that Stansted was the best possible site overall for the airport, it would have to be accepted in spite of the adverse local effects that it involved.¹ It is against these overall criteria that they responded to the Ministry and Government proposals and decisions. Their response was critical, indeed hostile, because their criteria were not met by the Government in its approach to the question.²

The County Councils became involved in the issue as major local government units which had planning responsibilities for the affected area. Both County Councils eventually came to adopt positions which were essentially the same as NWEEHPA. The Essex County Council were opposed to the development of the airport because they

1. Interviews.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 2 June, 1967; Harlow Citizen, 23 June, 1967; Daily Telegraph, 12 May, 1967; and Herts and Essex Observer, 9 February, 1968.

considered the problem to be one largely of town and country planning rather than one of aviation. The airport had obviously to be located upon a site that was suitable on aviation grounds for an airport. But once that had been determined, the actual location of the site should be determined and decided by full consideration of all the possible alternatives in relation to questions of town and country planning, noise, loss of agricultural land and loss of amenity.¹ Their attitude to the development of Stansted was critical because its development would cut across their plans for the area. It would introduce development into an area which the County's plan intended to preserve as a rural and 'green' area. This plan had been approved by the Government. Unlike the Inter-Departmental Committee they did not consider the area as suitable for large scale development nor did they think it should be developed.² But if it could be proved in an open and thorough investigation or inquiry that Stansted was the best site in spite of its numerous disadvantages then grounds of national necessity would override regional and local considerations. Because the Government did not show in its proposals that there were overriding national grounds for locating the airport at Stansted, the Essex County Council were critical of all proposals and decisions relating to Stansted.³

1. Interview (Mr. J.S. Mills).

2. Ibid.

3. Interview (Mr. J.S. Mills); Herts and Essex Observer, 9 February, 1968; Evening Standard, 5 February, 1968.

Hertfordshire at first seemed prepared to accept the airport. Then they developed a position opposed to the airport which was at first based upon a narrow local approach to the issue. This was based upon opposition to the adverse noise effects that the country would suffer. This provided their grounds for opposition to the airport at the public inquiry. It was not until after the Government decision that their attitudes to the issue came into line with those of NWEHPA and the Essex County Council. They were then opposed to the airport upon grounds of town and country planning as well as noise. In the final phases of the controversy they were therefore looking at the issue in national terms as well as purely local ones.¹

Again the attitudes of the local Councils were similar. They wanted the issue to be fully investigated and all the aspects of the question to be considered. But their attitudes and approach had more emphasis upon the local aspects and local problems because they had responsibilities in the affected area and were a spokesman of the local interest. They were concerned with the problems of noise, agricultural land loss, local amenities and living conditions. They were opposed to the airport proposals and decisions because they would be adversely affected by its development.²

1. Hertfordshire Mercury, 2 June, 1967; ibid., 1 December, 1967; and Herts and Essex Observer, 1 December, 1967.

2. E.g., Dunmow Interview (Mr. A.J. Little).

b) Attitudes towards decision-making in this case

The attitudes of the local pressure groups to the decision-making process in this case contributed to and stimulated pressure group activity particularly in the later phases of the controversy. Their attitudes to decision-making in this case were one of the major ingredients in their determined political campaign against the Government decision for Stansted. Attitudes to decision-making were also important because they formed a major factor in the conversion of the Councils from public authorities into public authority local/national pressure groups, who campaigned for a new inquiry into this issue.

Inside NWEHPA, there had always been a great deal of latent hostility and mistrust of the Government decision-making and decision-makers.¹ But this did not appear upon the surface until after the Government decision for Stansted, when this hostility and suspicion was a basic ingredient of the attitudes displayed by NWEHPA. Feeling inside NWEHPA was suspicious towards decision-makers because it was felt that the officials wanted Stansted as the airport regardless of the objections of the local people.² These latent suspicions seemed

1. This seems to suggest that there is perhaps considerable suspicion of the central government bureaucracy in Britain, and certainly more than is commonly supposed. Whether this is a rural or a regional type of phenomenon in Britain would need further investigation involving other areas of Britain. But again it is interesting to see discontent in a prosperous area in a centrally located (in relation to the seat of government) part of Britain and not just in the outlying parts of Britain such as Scotland and Wales.

2. Harlow Citizen, 18 September, 1964.

to be confirmed when the Government made its decision for Stansted in spite of the recommendations of their own Inspector. They felt that the Government was acting upon expediency, and the desires of groups such as BAA seemed to have been allowed to dictate the decision for the Government. They were angry because they considered that in this process they had been cheated by the Government.¹ They considered that the decision, and the procedure used for reaching it, were unjust and unfair. The Government had set up an inquiry and had said that they would abide by the results of the inquiry. But they did not do so when the inquiry went against them.²

Therefore for NWEHPA, the issue had become one of 'democratic methods' of decision-making as well as one of the site for the new airport.³ Indeed, the procedure adopted made a complete farce of democratic methods because "the Government clearly seems to have decided on Stansted in advance whatever the arguments against it."⁴

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 2 June, 1967.

2. NWEHPA leaflet 'Stansted still makes headlines'. Dunmow: May 1967. There were different interpretations of the position and status of the Stansted Public Inquiry on the part of NWEHPA and the Government. This added to the bitterness of NWEHPA over the issue. They saw the inquiry as an umpire who would judge between the two cases. The Government though only saw the inquiry as one of advising the Government of the local objections. In fact, the Government were correct on legal grounds in maintaining this position. This did, on the other hand, go against the spirit of their assurances of a full and fair inquiry and their promises to fully consider the local objections. They caused themselves unnecessary political trouble by going against the spirit, if not the letter, of their assurances.

3. NWEHPA, The Stansted Black Book, op. cit., p. 3.

4. Daily Telegraph, 15 May, 1967.

The realignment proposals made a complete mockery of the procedure of the public inquiry because these proposals involved an airport with two pairs of parallel runways on a different alignment from those presented to the public inquiry.¹ They were so suspicious of decision-making that they considered an independent inquiry or a Royal Commission was needed to gain a fair and impartial assessment of all the issues involved. If it was a full and fair inquiry in which all the issues were considered, they would accept the outcome of it, if the Ministry agreed to do the same.² On these terms they accepted the terms of reference for the Roskill Commission.

The attitudes of the Councils were not hostile in the same way as those of NWEHPA because they were public authorities which had to make public decisions of their own. But they were critical and angry over the decision to develop Stansted and were determined that it should be reversed. The whole approach to making a decision in this case was considered inadequate because from the beginning issues which concerned them, such as planning or the character of the area, were not weighed against the aviation considerations which seemed to have been predominant. They were angry over the decision because they did not like the way the decision had emerged out of a private review inside the Government, in which none of the objectors had a chance to put forth their point of view on the new evidence. Therefore

1. Harlow Citizen, 17 November, 1967.

2. Saffron Walden Weekly News, 1 March, 1968.

they considered that a new inquiry was needed so that all the issues local and national could be investigated so that the best available site should be chosen.

c) Attitudes towards pressure group activity by the local pressure groups

The attitudes to their own pressure group activity did not serve to limit the activity of NWEHPA, but were a limiting factor upon the activities undertaken by the Councils. NWEHPA was determined to undertake opposition to the airport by every means available to it within the law. For instance, their opposition would not go as far as blocking or sabotaging the construction of the airport, once the decision had legally been taken to proceed. The Councils also had this outer limit of bounds of the law upon their activity. But they also had other limitations which they placed upon themselves as public authorities. They would not undertake pressure group activity that would conflict with their responsibilities as public authorities and as representatives of all their residents. For this reason, they did not seek to become embroiled in the local debate in a partisan manner but rather tried to act as public authorities concerned about the effects of the airport rather than as a representative of one section of the local interest. They adopted the political campaign and Parliament as a channel of influence because they felt strongly that the Government was wrong and that the only ways open to them to put their views were by becoming pressure groups and using channels other than their normal channels

which seemed to be closed in this case.

But as pressure groups they seemed to feel that their activity should be limited to putting their views in a concerted manner to MPs and Peers, rather than seeking public support through the use of mass public opinion. The Councils seemed to feel that they could not campaign as the representative of a particular section as their task as a public authority was to be concerned with the whole of the local community, and especially if that meant spending the ratepayers' money. Rather they restricted themselves as part of the overall campaign to putting a case based upon the Councils' concerns as a public body.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STANSTED CONTROVERSY : INFLUENCE EXERTED AND
PRESSURE APPLIED (1) MARCH 1964 - MAY 1967

The focus of attention in this and the following chapter will be upon the exercise of influence and the exertion of pressure by the local pressure groups during the different stages of the controversy. This will involve an examination of their strategy and tactics. In addition, the ways, means and weapons which they used to exert influence in and pressure upon the targets and the channels of influence will be examined.¹

This will also involve a discussion of two external environmental factors, so far undiscussed, which are closely tied into the process of exerting influence and pressure. These two factors are the situation inside the particular channel of influence and the reactions in or by the particular channel of influence to pressure and influence. Strategy refers to the decisions, explicit or implicit, that the local pressure groups took about how to achieve their overall aims of pre-

1. In this case, the local pressure groups did not use all the channels of influence which were outlined in the framework presented in Chapter 2 (see above). At different stages of the controversy, they used the Administration, Parliament, Specialized Public Opinion, Mass Public Opinion and made the Executive the prime target of influence. For convenience, the two inquiries, which were vitally important focal points for pressure group action at their respective stages of the controversy, will be treated separately, even though they could be seen as part of the administrative process in this case.

venting the development of Stansted as the Third London Airport.

These included decisions about which channels of influence needed to be used and how they should be used. These strategic decisions provided the general framework within which they approached the problem of exerting influence and pressure. Once these decisions had been taken, and within the strategic framework which they set, tactical decisions were taken by the leadership of the local pressure groups about the exercise of influence and pressure in and on the channels of influence, including decisions in response to the actions and activities of other actors in the controversy.

The overall objective of the local pressure groups, which was to prevent the development of Stansted as the Third London Airport, was adopted in response to the Government intention and later decision to develop it. The pressure group activity which they undertook was essentially a response to the Government and Government decision-making because its nature was that of opposition and protest against the intentions and decisions of the Government and its Ministries to develop the airport. As a result, and because decision-making had to be undertaken in different stages, which confronted the local pressure groups with different situations, they had no overall strategy which applied throughout the controversy. They had to adopt new strategies of influence to meet these changing situations if they were to achieve their overall objectives. Their ability to change their strategy to fit the different situations, which they faced was a major factor, which

contributed to their ultimate success in preventing the development of Stansted.

STRATEGY 1964-1966

The controversy had begun in the first place because the Ministry of Aviation intended to develop Stansted into the Third London Airport, in response to which NWEEHPA was formed and the Councils became concerned about the question. The situation, which they then faced, was a normal part of the central government decision-making process, where planning and development questions and projects were involved. The Ministry of Aviation had put forward proposals for the development of the airport, and then was seeking local opinions and comments on the proposal through a public inquiry and through consultations with the Councils. The local people and the Councils were faced with the prospect of the development of the airport which would greatly affect their locality, and the opportunity to make their feelings known through consultations between central and local government and through a public inquiry. They knew that once these had been completed, the Government would reach a final decision which would confirm Stansted as the choice unless strong arguments and objections against it had been put forward. This phase was one in which it seemed that the decision-making process could be influenced merely by the presentation of strong arguments against the proposals; they were tentative proposals about which the Government had promised

not to make a final decision until it had carefully considered and weighed the results of and evidence presented at a full and fair public inquiry.

NWEEHPA's leaders from the formation of the organization saw the public inquiry as the key means through which to convince the Government that Stansted was an unsuitable site for the airport. The use of the public inquiry was the cornerstone of NWEEHPA's strategy of influence during this phase. This strategy for NWEEHPA involved preparing for and presenting its case to the public inquiry, while at the same time mobilizing local people to support its organization and to work to enable it to gain the resources which it needed to present the technical case at the public inquiry. This involved raising £ 25,000 that would allow it to create the full time secretariat which it needed, and to hire top lawyers and experts to prepare and present its case at the public inquiry.¹ The strategy was based upon the recognition that only through a strong technical case could it hope to succeed in convincing the public inquiry and hence the Government that the case for Stansted was wrong.² This meant that its case had to be well organized because "it is no good going along to the public inquiry when it comes off with a lot of jumbled facts. We have got to have a firm case to argue."³ Considerable emphasis was therefore

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 21 August, 1964.

2. NWEEHPA: Circular, August, 1964.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 21 August, 1964.

placed upon the careful preparation of the technical case because "if our case is to be fought constructively it is of paramount importance that the whole of the wide technical aspects of the problem should be studied by experts, who will not only produce concrete evidence and facts for our legal advisers, but also give evidence at the inquiry."¹

The Essex County Council was also to adopt a strategy during this phase which was centered upon the public inquiry as the key means through which to convince the Government that the choice of Stansted was unsuitable. They adopted this approach, rather than continue consultations with the Ministry, as the means of influencing the Government because only through the public inquiry could they set out in the open their full case against the airport, and because the consultations would only have yielded modifications in a scheme to which they were firmly opposed in its entirety. Their strategy involved their deploying the Council's resources of finance, technical information and experts to prepare and present a case against Stansted at the public inquiry.

The strategy adopted by Hertfordshire County Council was somewhat different because they were less directly affected than Essex. In fact, no clear overall strategy, involving opposition to the airport, emerged until just before the opening of the public inquiry. Initially they seemed prepared to accept the development of the airport if the Government would align the runways of the airport in such a way that made

1. Braintree and Witham Times, 26 March, 1965.

the noise effect upon Hertfordshire minimal. Their initial strategy, therefore, was one of trying to persuade the Ministry of Aviation to change the proposed alignment of the runways through negotiations and consultations. But when these talks failed to produce the hoped for results and their noise consultants reported serious noise implications for the locality, they changed their strategy, and from November 1965 were opposed to the airport and centered their activity upon convincing the Government, through the public inquiry, of the serious adverse effects it would have upon their area.

A clear overall strategy on the part of the local Councils was only slowly developed. They recognized the public inquiry, rather than consultations with the Ministry, as the means through which to try to convince the Government that Stansted was an unsuitable site. The problem for the local Councils was how to use this means. There were some abortive attempts to reach agreement upon preparing and presenting a co-ordinated case from the local Councils, but these failed. Some councils did not feel the need to undertake any action as they were not directly affected, while others felt that a co-ordinated case would not allow them to present their own particular problems for consideration at the public inquiry. In the end, some local Councils such as Epping and Ongar RDC, Harlow UDC and Braughing RDC associated themselves with the cases of their respective county councils, while other councils such as Dunmow RDC, Saffron Walden RDC and Borough Council jointly, Sawbridgeworth UDC and Bishop's Stortford

UDC presented their own objections to the public inquiry.

Essentially therefore, the strategy adopted at this stage of the controversy was to influence the Executive, which became their prime target of influence, through the public inquiry which the Government had promised the local pressure groups. They adopted this strategy rather than one which involved trying to influence the Executive directly or putting pressure upon the Executive through the use of public opinion or Parliament. At this stage the strategy they adopted was a narrow one related to the nature of the Government decision-making with which they were then confronted. Great emphasis was placed upon the public inquiry because they had to succeed in convincing the public inquiry that Stansted was not the right site for the airport if they were to have any chance of achieving their overall objective of preventing its development.

THE USE OF THE CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE AND TACTICAL DECISIONS ¹⁹⁶1964-1966

Their use of the channels of influence revolved around their strategy of using the public inquiry as the primary channel through which to influence the Government. Their use of the other channels of influence in this phase was directed to aiding and strengthening their position so that they could use the public inquiry more effectively. Their activities and tactical decisions were concerned with establishing or organizing themselves so that they could prepare and present their case against Stansted to the public inquiry. Their

preparations for the public inquiry were concerned with obtaining as many details as possible about the Ministry of Aviation's plans for the development of the airport and of the Government's plans for the development of the surrounding areas, and about the implications of these developments for the locality and their own interests and responsibilities. This process of preparation also included an attempt to influence the Government decisions about the exact nature of the public inquiry to be held.

a) Mass Public Opinion¹

NWEEHPA used and influenced local mass public opinion because their success, as opponents of the airport proposals, depended in part

1. The local pressure groups did not use national mass public opinion as a channel of influence during this period because its use could not help them achieve their aims in relation to the public inquiry, as the outcome of it would be determined by technical arguments and evidence rather than by securing publicity and support for opposition to the Ministry proposals. The support of national mass public opinion would have added nothing to the position of the local pressure groups because they were operating at this point in the administrative process, of which the public inquiry was a part, rather than the political arena, where national mass public opinion might have been one of the forces to mobilize to pressure the political decision-makers. Nor could national mass public opinion help create the local organization which NWEEHPA needed. Local mass public opinion was also not used by the Councils as a channel of influence because, although they needed to be responsive to local concerns and needs, they could speak with authority as they were established public authorities whose views needed to be taken into account, and indeed their views were sought by decision-makers in this case. Because they were Public Authorities, they were reluctant to become embroiled in a partisan manner in the local debate over the airport question, as they wanted to take a stand as the representative of the local interest as a whole rather than as the spokesman of one section of the local interest. They were also reluctant to use local mass public opinion because they were not acting as pressure groups at this stage, but rather carrying out the normal function of Councils in putting their views upon the issues involved in and on the implications of the airport development.

upon their ability to mobilize most of the local people who were opposed to the airport. This support was needed to create and build up their organization into an effective protest pressure group. By mobilizing the local people they could create the resources, especially financial ones, which they needed to assemble the technical case which they intended to present to the public inquiry. In addition, they needed local support to enable NWEHPA to speak with authority as a representative of local public opinion, and if their views and case were to be given weight by the decision-makers in the making of the final decision upon the site. NWEHPA, therefore, influenced and used local public opinion to create and extend its organization in the towns, villages and parishes of the affected district surrounding the proposed airport. They mobilized those already opposed to the airport into active supporters and converted the waverers into active ones. This was done by publicizing the aims and existence of NWEHPA and by showing local people that they had a way of opposing the airport which offered the best chance of preventing the development of Stansted as the new London Airport. For the waverers and doubters, they pointed to the serious adverse consequences for the area that would follow from the development of Stansted as an international airport. In seeking to mobilize local public opinion, NWEHPA was able to capitalize upon the nature of the community in which it was operating. In the rural area around Stansted, individuals had close contact with each other and a great sense of community. These served to help NWEHPA in

its efforts to mobilize local public opinion because this close contact between individuals meant that much could be done in each village in the ordinary course of village life.¹ The local sense of community and the threat that the proposed airport posed to the way of life of this community gave the local people, at least in the most affected areas, strong reasons for backing NWEHPA's efforts to prevent the development of Stansted. This basic opposition to the airport made NWEHPA's task of mobilizing local public opinion to fight the airport relatively easy. These informal processes of communication between individuals in the community, though impossible to document, were, given the nature of this rural community, more important for mobilizing local people than most of the more formal means used. Indeed, the Thaxted Anti-Airport Committee urged their supporters to use their contacts to mobilize other individuals. They urged their supporters to help by going "on talking and talking to everybody about it."²

During these years, NWEHPA was to become an integral part of the community in the same way as many other groups were. The public meeting provided another important more formal means whereby the NWEHPA organization was created and expanded with the formation of local anti-airport groups. In this period, meetings were held in many towns, villages and parishes to discuss the effects of the pro-

1. Interviews.

2. Airport Opposition Committee (Thaxted). A leaflet issued by the Thaxted Anti-Airport Committee in early 1965.

posed development of the airport upon that particular area. Representatives of NWEHPA attended these meetings, and put NWEHPA's point of view on the issue and its implications for the area. They outlined the way in which NWEHPA proposed to fight the proposals and suggested how that group of people could fight them. These suggestions usually revolved around the formation of an anti-airport committee in the area concerned, which should join with other local anti-airport groups and NWEHPA in fighting the proposals. Many of the local anti-airport groups were formed at these meetings.¹ Sometimes the formation of the local anti-airport group was proposed by a member of NWEHPA,² but usually it was someone then unconnected with NWEHPA who proposed that the meeting form its anti-airport committee.³

These meetings were also a means of reaching a wider audience than that attending the meeting because these meetings were reported in the local press. This helped create a momentum behind the formation of the local NWEHPA groups and the protest against the airport, which

1. Some of the larger meetings were at:- Takeley, Herts and Essex Observer, 28 August, 1964; Dunmow, ibid., 18 September, 1964; Thaxted, ibid., 30 October, 1964; Harlow, Harlow Citizen, 27 November, 1964; Stansted, Herts and Essex Observer, 19 February, 1965; Sheering, Harlow Gazette, 19 March, 1965; and Much Hadham, Hertfordshire Mercury, 12 November, 1965.

2. For example, Mr. M. Herbert, a member of NWEHPA's executive, proposed the resolution at the Dunmow Parish Meeting that it should form an anti-airport group. Herts and Essex Observer, 18 September, 1964.)

3. Interview (Mr. John Lukies).

encouraged the formation of further groups opposed to the airport in other villages. This momentum was created and sustained through other means besides public meetings and press reports. Sir Roger Hawkey, a co-chairman of NWEHPA, appealed directly for local support through the letters to the Editor Column of the Herts and Essex Observer.¹ In addition, other modes of publicity were used. These included adverts in the local papers and the distribution of posters, stickers and leaflets throughout the area to individuals and other groups.²

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 28 August, 1964. The Herts and Essex Observer is the most widely distributed local newspaper in the affected area around the airport.

2. Their adverts were placed in the papers to inform the local public how and where to contact NWEHPA rather than to educate them about NWEHPA's case or the consequences of the airport for the area. These served to mobilize those opposed to the airport by inviting them to specific meetings, such as the one in Dunmow in September 1964, Herts and Essex Observer, 11 September, 1964, or the one in Saffron Walden in April 1965, Saffron Walden Weekley News, 23 April, 1965. In addition, a full list of Secretaries of the local groups was advertised, Herts and Essex Observer, 19 February, 1965. The posters and stickers were distributed to stress that the area would be affected by noise and to show the amount of support that the airport opponents had in the area through a display of posters and stickers on houses and cars. Their major poster emphasized the noise impact upon the area by showing a woman clutching her ears as a giant jet aircraft is flying overhead with the slogan "THIS COULD BE YOU. No more Inland Airports. People before Planes", NWEHPA Files. Their leaflets, which were distributed to other groups and individuals in the area, were used to gain the support of uncommitted individuals and groups by outlining what NWEHPA considered to be the disastrous consequences of the airport for the district. They also outlined how NWEHPA was fighting the airport proposals and how individuals and groups could support its efforts. Leaflets were also produced by some of the NWEHPA local groups, for instance the Dunmow Preservation Association and the Thaxted Anti-Airport Committee, as part of their fund-raising campaigns.

Using these means, they were able to appeal successfully for local public support. By the time of the public inquiry, they had created an organization which was based upon 40 village, town and parish groups representing 13,300 people in this area, together with 30 other associated groups. Through this organization, which was created upon the basis of an appeal to the local public, they were able to obtain the financial and technical resources that they needed to oppose the airport. In fact, NWEHPA used local public opinion, by appealing for support on the basis of local feelings on matters such as noise, way of life, and the character of the district, to create an organization which channeled this emotional opposition into a constructive technical case before the public inquiry. The use of this channel of influence was essential to NWEHPA because its use provided them with the key underpinning, in the form of local public support, which they needed to be able to successfully present a case to the public inquiry.

NWEHPA's appeal for local public support was mostly based upon an appeal to local feelings and emotions about their way of life in and the character of the district and also to the interests of local people. NWEHPA emphasized very strongly that the airport would have a very considerable adverse effect upon their lives and upon the character of the district such that their way of life would be destroyed, and life in the area made intolerable without there being any compensating advantages or benefits for the local people. In fact, this point

provided the major argument of NWEHHA's approach to the local public. They stressed that the project was an enormous one because "if the recommendations of the Ministry of Aviation are carried into effect, we shall have in our midst in ten years a vast international airport, handling 64 planes an hour with no restrictions on noise, or indeed anything else. Alongside it, to house the army of airport workers, there is to be a New Town of 100,000 people, which might stretch from Stansted almost to Thaxted."¹ The area would become one of intolerable noise day and night because "if the east-west runways which have been mentioned are ever built, Stortford and Dunmow could be in the direct line of giant jets landing and taking off — one a minute, all night as well as all day."² This intolerable noise area might stretch from Thaxted to Sawbridgeworth and from Puckeridge to Stebbing. The noise impact upon the area provided an effective argument, with which to convince people that the airport would disrupt their lives, because they were able to point to the effects that they were suffering from the then limited number of overflying aircraft which were using the airport. They could then leave it to people's imagination to judge the disruption and hardship that they would suffer from an unlimited use of an expanded airport. As a result, this aspect of the problem provided a major theme in the speeches of NWEHHA's leaders and

1. The Threat is the Airport. A leaflet distributed by NWEHHA in late 1964.

2. Ibid.

in its publicity literature.¹

The adverse effect of an airport and its associated developments upon the character and mode of life in the area provided another major theme of the attack upon the airport. For example, Sir Roger Hawkey, speaking at Felsted, pointed to the fact that the airport would change the mode of life of the area and would make places such as Felsted part of "a semi urban sprawl," and this development would bring multiple chain stores and bingo halls without bringing prosperity to local businesses or local people.² All that the airport would bring to the area was the destruction of their way of life. "For Dunmow this is a moment of decision! We are threatened with an airport on our doorstep which would destroy the Dunmow we all know, the Dunmow which is our town, the Dunmow we all love Dunmow is an ancient agricultural town which grew out of the prosperity of the surrounding countryside. Destroy that countryside and Dunmow is itself destroyed, for the town depends upon it not just for its livelihood but for its very character."³

The implication was therefore that the airport needed to be opposed if the decent and tolerable life that then existed in the area was to be preserved. But not only this, they were threatened with

1. For example, Mr. John Lukies at Harlow, November 1964. Harlow Citizen, 27 November, 1964.

2. Braintree and Witham Times, 27 November, 1964. This point was also a major theme in Mr. Herbert's speech at the Dunmow Parish Meeting in September 1964. See the Herts and Essex Observer, 18 September, 1964.

3. Great Dunmow Preservation Society to All who live or work in Dunmow. A leaflet distributed in Dunmow during December 1964.

the destruction of their way of life in this rural area without their gaining any compensation or benefits in return. Those whose homes would be demolished would receive compensation for that loss. The vast majority of local residents whose homes would not be demolished but who would suffer from 'planning blight' and from noise, once the airport was operational, would receive no compensation on account of the hardship that they would suffer. Indeed, existing legislation did not provide for such compensation and none was envisaged to enable compensation to be provided on these grounds.¹ Nor would there be any benefit for local businessmen and local traders because the big chain stores would move in and force the small businessman and trader out of business. "As for local traders, with perhaps a few exceptions, optimistic ideas of doubled turnover etc. are just pipe-dreams. New airport means new town. New town means Big Business moves in and small Traders squeezed out."²

But they were most anxious in attempting to gain support to show people that the fight was not lost, as it was still possible for them to oppose the proposals. The Government had not made a final decision on the site and would not do so until after a public inquiry. "There is a widespread but wholly wrong impression that the airport

1. The Threat is the Airport. Op. cit.

2. NWEEHPA : One Year Later. July 1965. This was an appeal to a particular section of the local community, which was a source of financial support and which could be persuaded to support NWEEHPA as its particular position would be seriously affected.

proposals have already had Government approval, and that they are therefore so much in the national interest that they must in loyalty be accepted. Mr. R. A. Butler, the Member for Saffron Walden, assures us that this is not the case. The recommendations are those of the Ministry of Aviation only: they have not even been considered by the Cabinet, and they are therefore susceptible to change, or even to outright rejection. Ministry cases sometimes fail — remember Crichel Down!"¹ Recalling Crichel Down, on another occasion, Sir Roger Hawkey stressed that Governments had been defeated before, and could be again. "... such proposals can be defeated and let us not forget the case of Crichel Down, when one young man defeated the whole might of a government to safeguard his home and land, a victory which, in fact, brought the resignation of a Minister of the Crown."² It was worth fighting these proposals at the public inquiry because its outcome was not a 'foregone conclusion,' as they had assurances that the public inquiry would be a full and fair one.³

But in order to fight these proposals it was necessary to produce a strong technical case because "experience demonstrates that displays of sentiment or emotion carry little weight with the Inspector at a Public Enquiry. A sound and reasonable technical case, presented

1. NWEHPA: Circular, August 1964.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 28 August, 1964.

3. North West Essex Preservation Association. A leaflet distributed by NWEHPA early in 1965.

ably and vigorously, sometimes does."¹ This, they intended to provide through the use of technical experts, legal advisers, and a full time secretariat. But to do this, they needed the support of people in the area. "We are fighting the Stansted Airport proposals to keep your home and your countryside a peaceful place in which to live. Without your financial support we are powerless. You must help."²

b) The Executive

At this stage of the controversy the Executive was the prime target of influence of the local pressure groups. The strategy which they had adopted was to influence the Executive indirectly through the public inquiry. In fact, they made no attempt to influence the Executive directly on the question of the location of the airport because they had been assured of a full and fair public inquiry, and because there were few decisions to be taken by the Cabinet or Ministers on this issue until the results of the public inquiry had been examined.

On the tactical level, though, they sought in their few discussions and contacts with the Executive at this stage to influence the Government decisions on the terms of reference of the public inquiry. They were concerned about these because decisions relating to the terms of reference would affect considerably their ability to oppose the airport proposals and the type of case which they could present

1. NWEEHPA : Circular, August 1964.

2. North West Essex Preservation Association. Op. cit.

against them. With the experience of the Gatwick Public Inquiry in mind, Essex County Council and NWEHPA, who were the major objectors, sought wide terms of reference for the public inquiry so that they could gain the widest possible freedom to show that Stansted was wrong on national as well as local grounds.¹

In the autumn of 1965, a joint delegation from NWEHPA and the Essex County Council visited the Minister of Aviation to discuss the terms of reference of the public inquiry when he was about to decide them. This delegation stressed the importance of allowing objectors a full opportunity of making their case against the airport without being restricted by the terms of reference of the inquiry, and in particular they wanted to be able to question the assumptions upon which Stansted had been chosen, including the question of the timing of the need for the airport, and not merely to be able to present local objections to the particular site and proposals for Stansted.² In addition, they wanted to be able to put forward alternative sites for consideration. They again sought assurances that the inquiry was going to be a full and fair one, the results of which would be carefully considered by the Government in making the final decision on Stansted.

Their efforts to secure the widest possible terms of reference

1. Interviews. The local pressure groups wanted to avoid the situation which had occurred at the Gatwick Public Inquiry where the limited terms of reference had curtailed the ability of the opponents of that airport to present a case against it on anything but the most local grounds.

2. Harlow Gazette, 17 September, 1965.

0 were partially successful, because unlike the rules for the Gatwick Inquiry, they were to be allowed to suggest modifications to the proposed scheme, and to propose alternative sites for consideration. But they were not going to be allowed, as they wanted to, to question the need for or the timing of the need for the new airport. They also received assurances from Mr. Jenkins, then Minister of Aviation, that the development of Stansted would not be pressed ahead for lack of time to survey and study alternative sites if the Inspector suggested that an alternative site should be chosen.¹ The results of this attempt to influence the Government were reasonably satisfactory to the local pressure groups, as they made no attempt to widen them once they had been made known by the Minister. Instead they exploited the limited freedom that they had gained to put the case against Stansted on national as well as local grounds at the public inquiry. These assurances, which they received, confirmed their view that the public inquiry was the crucial channel through which they could influence the final Government decision on Stansted, as they had been regularly promised that their objections would be carefully considered by the Minister, and that alternative sites would be considered if the Inspector recommended that course.

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1. For details of the Minister's reply to the delegation, see pp. 81-83 above.

c) The Administration¹

On the other hand, the local pressure groups attached very little importance to relations with the Administration because they could not gain their overall objectives by influencing this channel. The most they could hope to gain were modifications in the plan to develop Stansted, none of which would meet their basic objections.² Rather the local pressure groups used their few contacts with the Administration to secure information on the nature and extent of the proposals and their implications for the area. Their efforts to secure information were not particularly successful. In their contacts with the Ministry of Aviation, they did not secure much information about the nature of the proposed development except that it would be extensive and have a considerable effect upon the district. It was not until the autumn of 1965, when the Ministry circulated a report with maps that outlined their plans which were to be presented to the public inquiry later that autumn, that the local pressure groups received any definite idea of the exact nature of the proposals for the new airport.³ As the local

1. In this case officials of the Ministry of Aviation, of Housing and Local Government, and of Transport.

2. At this stage neither Ministry officials nor the Government were prepared to make major changes in the scheme or change the intention to develop Stansted as the airport until after the public inquiry had been completed and its results assessed.

3. Many of these contacts were part of the process of consultation between the central government department concerned and the affected Councils that is undertaken on planning and development projects. In this case though, the consultative process between the affected Councils and the departments concerned was rather intermittent because the Councils were not interested in modifying what they considered to be an unsuitable and badly thought out set of proposals. In effect, the consultative process virtually broke down because there was a conflict of views between the Councils and the Government Departments concerned.

pressure groups and the Ministry had conflicting objectives and interests, a close relationship involving consultations and negotiations between the administration and the local pressure groups was not possible in this case. The result was that the Administration was not an important channel of influence.¹

d) Parliament

At this stage, the local pressure groups did not concern themselves with trying to influence Parliament as a whole because it was not directly involved as there was nothing for it to decide until the Government made its decision and presented its proposals for Parliamentary approval. But they did attempt to enlist the support and aid of their local MPs, especially Mr. R.A. Butler and his successor Mr. Peter Kirk. They acted as spokesmen for and as channels of communications for their constituents by putting their worries and concerns before the relevant decision-makers and Ministers.

The results of the activities of Mr. Butler were important because they further pointed to the need for the local pressure groups to present a full case to the public inquiry. NWEHPA and some of its groups such as the Takeley Anti-Airport Committee had approached Mr. Butler for his help as early as the beginning of August 1964.

This was followed by some meetings and exchanges with him during

1. Here the behaviour of protest pressure groups and of public authority pressure groups opposing an impending Government decision contrasts with the pattern of behaviour of interest groups which are the most important pressure groups in Britain. See pp. 11-14 above.

the autumn of 1964.¹ He also met with representatives of local Councils and local county councillors to discuss the proposals.² While he was a Minister, he took the position that as a Minister he could not decide anything on the proposals until after the results of the public inquiry had been considered by the Government. But he urged his constituents to present their case against the airport as strongly as possible so that it would be given full consideration at the public inquiry which he pledged would be a fair and genuine one. He offered to advise them on how to present their views³ and he discussed their problems with the then Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home,⁴ and the Ministry of Aviation.⁵ In addition, he promised to canvass other MPs for support for the anti-airport case.⁶ As a result of his activities, he promised his constituents that no final decisions would be made until after consideration of the findings of the public inquiry, and that the Government, in particular the Ministry of Aviation, were still prepared to consider alternative sites that might be suggested.⁷

1. For instance, he attended a meeting of the Takeley Anti-Airport Committee at the beginning of August, The Times, 5 August, 1964.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 31 July, 1964. The local Councils were Saffron Walden RDC, and BC and Dunmow RDC, and the County Councillors for these areas.

3. The Times, 5 August, 1964.

4. Harlow Citizen, 18 September, 1964.

5. Herts and Essex Observer, 4 September, 1964.

6. Ibid., 28 August, 1964.

7. Ibid., 4 September, 1964; Harlow Citizen, 18 September, 1964.

Mr. Peter Kirk, who was also active in representing the views of his constituents, took a less neutral stance than his predecessor by opposing the airport upon the basis of the situation as it was then developing. He argued that "it is up to the Minister of Aviation to justify in the national interest the expansion of Stansted as London's third airport. At the moment this has not been done." He thought that the Minister would need to produce more evidence than that contained in the report which recommended Stansted. He considered that this report was defective as there had been no consideration of the position of agriculture.¹ He also said that he was prepared to co-operate with other local MPs to fight the proposals.² He met with groups in his constituency such as the Takeley Anti-Airport Committee³ and the Saffron Walden BC.⁴ His major concern was organizing and introducing the deputation which visited the Minister of Aviation in September to discuss the terms of reference of the public inquiry.⁵

The local MPs therefore provided an important channel through which the views of the local pressure groups, especially NWEEHPA, were made known to Ministers. These efforts contributed to the partial success of the local pressure groups in gaining wider terms

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 12 March, 1965.

2. Saffron Walden Weekly News, 2 April, 1965.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 4 June, 1965.

4. Ibid., 16 July, 1965.

5. Ibid., 4 June, 1965. For details of this meeting, see pp. 81-83 and 233-234 above.

of reference for the Stansted Public Inquiry than those for the Gatwick Public Inquiry. Their approaches to local MPs enabled them to establish contact and gain their support which gave them a voice in the House of Commons which was to be of value in the post-decision phase.

e) The Public Inquiry

As a result of Government promises and assurances that the public inquiry would be a full and fair one, the local pressure groups had come to view it as the most important channel of influence through which they could influence the final decision on the site of the airport. It was important to influence the public inquiry because the Government would receive a report from their Inspector on the arguments presented to the inquiry and his conclusions upon the choice of Stansted. This report was expected to have some influence upon the Government's decision, as they had promised that the results of the public inquiry would be carefully considered before any final decision was made. Most of the local pressure groups intended to influence the Government and the Minister, through the public inquiry Inspector and his report, by presenting cases based upon technical arguments and evidence.

Although the approaches of the various local pressure groups to the public inquiry were different, most of them spent a considerable amount of time and energy in organizing their cases. NWEHPA and the Essex County Council both employed Counsel¹ and a team of experts

1. The Counsel for NWEHPA was Mr. Peter Boydell, Q.C. and for Essex County Council it was Mr. Douglas Frank, Q.C.

to present their case and evidence.¹ On the other hand, Hertfordshire County Council limited themselves to calling a small number of witnesses who were concerned with their particular problems.² The approaches adopted by the local Councils differed from those of other objectors. While most of the local councils presented objections to the public in-

1. NWEEHPA's expert witnesses included Mr. Lewis Keeble, Mr. Alan Stratford, Mr. Harold Hutchings and Professor Elfyn Richards who acted as expert advisers for the preparation of NWEEHPA's case. (For details on these experts, see p. 179 above.) Other expert witnesses included Mr. Alec Leggatt on the construction aspects, Captain James Percy, the Senior BOAC pilot until his retirement in November 1964, on traffic in the air, Mr. Peter Rowe, the headmaster of Bishop's Stortford College, on the effects of the airport on the educational establishments, Mr. James Wentworth Day on the historical, architectural and rural character of the district, and Sir George Langley-Taylor, the Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, on the effect of the proposals on the preservation of rural areas. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., pp. 14-15. Essex County Council employed a team of 9 expert witnesses which included members of its staff and others specially employed for this case. Mr. Frederick Sharman, a qualified civil engineer and an associate member of Sir William Halcrow and Partners who were Consultants for Essex in this case, dealt with the planning problems involved in the project. Other witnesses dealt with particular aspects of the project and the Essex County Council case. Mr. Thomas Henderson, assistant County Planning Adviser, dealt with the planning and development implications for the character of and for the Council's plans for the area. He also compared the position of Stansted with that of Cliffe and Sheppey. Mr. Royston Rofe, who was the Operations Manager of the International Aeradio Group, gave evidence on the suitability of Sheppey and Cliffe upon air traffic grounds. Mr. Donald Tanton, an expert upon agriculture in Essex, dealt with agricultural questions, while Mr. Jack Jones, Traffic Engineer in the County Highways Department, dealt with various aspects of the access problems. Other witnesses dealt with land values, Hatfield Forest, and access to Sheppey and Cliffe via the Thames. Ibid., pp. 11-13.

2. Hertfordshire County Council was represented by Lord Colville. Dr. William Linsell, Consultant Pathologist at the Herts and Essex General Hospital in Bishop's Stortford, gave evidence upon the effects of the airport upon this hospital. Mr. Richard Clark, assistant Education Officer for Hertfordshire County Council, dealt with noise effects upon the county's educational establishments, while Mr. Lawrence Kitching, Deputy County Planning Officer, dealt with noise and other planning problems in his evidence. Ibid., p. 19.

quiry, some, such as Epping and Ongar RDC and Harlow UDC which were not immediately affected, limited their activity to presenting written objections and associating themselves with the case being put forward by Essex County Council,¹ while yet others more immediately affected by the proposals were also represented at the hearings of the public inquiry. These included Saffron Walden RDC, and Saffron Walden Borough Council, who were jointly represented by the same counsel, Dunmow RDC who were represented by their Clerk, who happened to be a barrister, Bishop's Stortford UDC who were also represented by their Clerk, and Sawbridgeworth UDC who were represented by a local solicitor. With the exception of Bishop's Stortford, these councils relied upon their representative to put their objections and the evidence in his address to the inquiry. Bishop's Stortford, in addition, did call an expert witness on the problem of noise, which was one of the major concerns of the town with regard to the airport.

On the tactical level using their team of experts, NWEHPA attempted to show that there was a substantial case, on national as well as local, and on aviation as well as non aviation grounds for saying that Stansted was not a suitable site for the new airport for London, and that at the very least, the whole question needed further investigation before any final decision was made. The NWEHPA case before the public inquiry was divided into three overlapping parts aimed

1. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., pp. 46-7 and p. 11.

at achieving these overall objectives. First, they attempted to show the disadvantages of the Stansted site. Second, they pointed to the inadequacies and inconsistencies of the Ministry case. This second part was also achieved by pointing to the disadvantages of Stansted. An examination of these disadvantages made it clear that the proposals had not been fully considered upon all grounds or in all of their implications by the Ministry of Aviation and the Inter-Departmental Committee, and they were inadequate because they were based solely upon technical aviation needs and considerations. Third, they examined the advantages that the Padworth site seemed to offer with the purpose of showing that there were other alternatives, which seemed to offer advantages that Stansted lacked, that should be investigated more fully before the final decision was taken.¹

The tactical aims of the Essex County Council at the public inquiry were to convince the Inspector and through him the Minister and the Government that other sites should be investigated before the final decision was taken. To achieve their aims at the public inquiry, they attempted to show through their arguments and evidence that the Stansted choice and other possible alternative sites had not been fully investigated by the Ministry of Aviation and the Inter-Departmental Committee because a narrow approach had been adopted to the question from the outset. They attempted to show the public inquiry that the

1. Mr. Peter Boydell for NWEHPA. Herts and Essex Observer, 16 January, 1966.

issue was primarily one of town and country planning rather than of aviation, and that on these planning grounds the objections to Stansted outweighed the advantages that the site might have on aviation grounds.¹ But they agreed that protests against Stansted were not sufficient cause for the Minister to give up Stansted because before doing that, he had to be satisfied that there was a suitable alternative site. They attempted to show the public inquiry that there was a suitable alternative site by putting forward the alternatives of Sheppey and Cliffe for consideration.² Their case before the public inquiry had two aspects. First, they attempted to show the objections to and disadvantages of Stansted and second, they attempted to compare these with the advantages that Sheppey and Cliffe seemed to offer.

The tactical aims of the Hertfordshire County Council were more limited. They had only decided to actively oppose the airport at the public inquiry a few weeks before the inquiry opened. Their grounds for opposition were more limited than those of the major objectors because Hertfordshire was only concerned with the effects upon areas of their county and their responsibilities. The Hertfordshire case was aimed at showing the public inquiry that there were serious problems, particularly in regard to noise, which had to be considered and weighed before the airport was developed at Stansted.

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 17 December, 1965.

2. Ibid. See Mr. Douglas Frank's opening address to the public inquiry.

The tactical aims of the local Councils which were represented at the public inquiry were similar to those of Hertfordshire because their aims were to focus attention upon the adverse consequences and implications of the proposed development for the character of and upon the lives of the people of their areas. By doing this, they wanted to show that there were considerable objections on local grounds. These should be considered very carefully before any final decision was made for Stansted. For instance, Mr. Little, the Dunmow Clerk, hoped to convince the Inspector that "the defects of Stansted are such, and the objections are such that it is impossible to recommend it as London's third airport."¹ These Councils had not prepared elaborate technical cases because they were concerned with presenting arguments and evidence relating to their particular problems and concerns rather than duplicating the more general evidence and arguments of the major objectors, which in general they supported.²

From the arguments and evidence presented by the local pressure groups to the public inquiry, it is clear that individually and cumulatively they were able to present a substantial amount of evidence to back their objections to Stansted as the site for the new airport. They were also able to put forward enough evidence to support their conten-

1. The cases of Sawbridgeworth UDC, of Saffron Walden RDC and Borough Council jointly and of Bishop's Stortford were similar to the case put forward by Dunmow RDC. Herts and Essex Observer, 4 February, 1966 and The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., p. 16.

2. For instance, Dunmow's Clerk said that his Council supported the evidence of NWEHPA. Herts and Essex Observer, 28 January, 1966.

tion that there were other alternative sites which seemed to offer advantages that Stansted lacked and which should be investigated before the final decision on the site of the new airport was made. The evidence and arguments presented by the local pressure groups in their cases falls into six overlapping issues. The most important of the issues raised by the local pressure groups was the question of regional, town and country planning. Related very closely to this was the issue of the character of the district. These two issues together formed a major pivot of the evidence presented to the inquiry by the objectors. Other issues concerned noise, surface access, agriculture and aviation.

Unlike the Ministry case, the cases of the local pressure groups, especially the Essex County Council and NWEHPA, devoted considerable attention to planning questions. Indeed, they considered that a basic inadequacy of the Ministry case was its failure to consider the overall planning questions involved. This was highlighted, as Mr. Boydell for NWEHPA pointed out, by the fact that the Ministry had failed to produce a single planning witness at the inquiry.¹ This criticism of the Ministry case was also echoed in the evidence of many of the expert witnesses. For instance, Mr. Stratford, for NWEHPA, was surprised that in the decision to build the new international airport no account had been taken of the repercussions upon town and country planning,

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 14 January, 1966.

population distribution, congestion of surface transport and the cost to the air operating industry.¹

The development of the airport at Stansted was attacked upon planning grounds by Mr. Thomas Henderson, for the Essex County Council, because such development conflicted with the Council's plans for the area, plans which had been approved by the Government. The County Council had consistently used its powers to preserve the character of the neighbourhood and had adopted a policy of directing development to the South and South East of the County so that it could preserve a wedge of open countryside in the North and North West of the County.² In regard to planning for this area, the County's view was that industry and development should be along the Thames estuary which was the natural place for such development. Indeed, an airport in the Thames estuary would be of value to such development, while there was no such need in the Stansted area.³ On more local grounds, the local Councils opposed the development of the airport as bad planning. For instance, Dunmow RDC argued that Stansted's development would sweep the whole area into a development of a huge magnitude. This would mean the

1. Ibid. Another NWEHPA witness, Mr. Keeble, argued that these considerations together with the loss of amenity and the loss of food production had to be balanced against the purely aviation merits of the site. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., p. 14.

2. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., p. 38.

3. Ibid. This view on the location of development in Essex was supported by other expert witnesses. Mr. Sharman, for Essex, argued that the Thames estuary was a natural axis for transport activities and industrial development and a natural site for the airport. Ibid. This view was also supported by Mr. Keeble for NWEHPA. Ibid., p. 14.

disappearance of peace and quiet in the area, busier roads, commercialization and industrialization, and the loss of fine agricultural land. Mr. Little, for Dunmow, considered that this "would be thoroughly bad planning from a local, regional and national viewpoint, and it would be a tragedy for those who live in the district as well as those who visit the district."¹

Related to planning issues was the question of the character of the district around Stansted. The development of the airport would have changed an area which should be preserved. Mr. Henderson argued that the airport would have destroyed villages such as Thaxted which contained many buildings of the 18th century and earlier, many of which were of special architectural and historical interest.² This view was also supported by Mr. Wentworth Day, for NWEHHA, who considered that the development of the airport would have ruined an area of 'unspoilt rural beauty' which was unique as a "quiet unspoiled pocket of old yeoman England" containing many old houses and churches of national architectural and historical value.³

The evidence presented to the inquiry pointed to the fact that alternative sites were more favourable on grounds of planning and character of the district involved. Mr. Keeble thought that Padworth was preferable as an area for development on regional planning grounds

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 28 January, 1966.

2. Ibid., 24 December, 1965.

3. Ibid., 21 January, 1966.

as it was the biggest area of under utilized land in South East England.¹ Sheppey and Cliffe were situated in the Thames estuary which, it had been argued, provided the natural site for the airport. The areas around Sheppey and Cliffe were more suitable for development than that around Stansted as these areas did not contain as many buildings of historical and architectural interest.²

Another issue neglected by the Ministry was the question of agriculture.³ Mr. Tanton, for Essex, argued that the effects upon agriculture would be very severe if the airport was developed at Stansted, involving a loss of 10,000 acres when ancillary developments were also considered. On the other hand the sites at Sheppey and Cliffe would be on marsh lands.⁴

The noise problem, which was given scant attention by the Ministry, figured prominently in the cases of the local pressure groups. Professor Elfyn Richards, for NWEHPA, argued that "it is clear that the noise which will arise from the proposed airport at Stansted will render life intolerable to the present inhabitants of this rural area,

1. The Times, 12 January, 1966.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 24 December, 1965. Mr. Henderson quoted figures to the effect that there were 40 buildings of architectural and historical interest at Sheppey, 96 at Cliffe and 514 at Stansted within the area covered by the 45 NNI contour based upon an SBR of 64 hourly movements.

3. The local pressure groups left most of the consideration of this issue to the NFU which was represented before the inquiry.

4. Herts and Essex Observer, 14 January, 1966.

and will hamper them in their daily routine."¹ This point formed one of the major objections to the airport presented by Mr. Little, for Dunmow RDC. He thought "that when the true picture of the noise problem is considered then the conclusion will be that the objection on grounds of noise is the most serious one. And it cannot be tolerated and accepted."² The noise problem also provided the major grounds for the objections of the Bishop's Stortford UDC.³ The noise problem also provided the major part of the objections of the Hertfordshire County Council to the airport. Their witnesses gave evidence to suggest that noise would be a serious problem in the County especially with regard to the Herts and Essex Hospital in Bishop's Stortford and to educational establishments in the eastern part of the county.⁴ Other evidence on the noise problem pointed to the fact that the alternative sites of Padworth, Sheppey and Cliffe would cause less problems because fewer people would be affected by noise if the airport were located on any of these sites.⁵

1. Ibid., 21 January, 1966.

2. Ibid., 28 January, 1966. Mr. Little calculated that out of a population of 23,000 in his RDC's area, 8,497 people would be 'gravely' affected by noise.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 28 January, 1966.

4. Ibid., 28 January and 4 February, 1966, and The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., p. 19. The serious effects of noise on educational establishments was also the subject of the evidence of Mr. Peter Rowe. Herts and Essex Observer, 21 January, 1966.

5. Herts and Essex Observer, 21 January, 1966. Mr. Henderson provided figures to show that more people would be affected by noise if Stansted were chosen. On the basis of the number of people falling within the 45 NNI contour on an SBR of 64 hourly movements, he estimated that 4,500 people at Sheppey, 10,000 at Cliffe and 26,000 at Stansted would be seriously affected by noise. Herts and Essex Observer, 24 December, 1965.

The issue of surface access provided some degree of controversy during the inquiry because of a direct conflict of evidence between the local pressure groups and the Ministry. Indeed, the Ministry evidence on surface access was extremely weak as the evidence presented by Mr. Kerr for the Ministry did not sustain the criteria of 60 minutes travelling time from central London to Stansted. This was a major inconsistency in the Ministry case which was attacked by the local pressure groups.¹ The evidence presented on this issue attempted to show that the Ministry evidence on travelling times and access to Stansted was wrong and to show that the travelling times and access to other alternative sites was more favourable. For instance, Mr. Hutchings, for NWEHPA, thought that on surface access Stansted did not meet the requirements of convenience of surface access.² The problem was that even when the 25 miles of the M.11 had been constructed, there would still be a journey of 10 miles into central London through built up areas and heavily used roads. He estimated the off peak journey time to Stansted from central London as 75 minutes and as much as 105 minutes in peak periods, while it would take 90 minutes to Heathrow from Stansted under favourable conditions and up to 135 minutes under less favourable conditions.³ Again, the evidence pre-

1. For instance by Mr. Peter Boydell in cross examination and in his closing address devoted considerable attention to this point. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 and 17 December, 1965, and 18 February, 1966.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 21 January, 1966.

3. Ibid. Mr. Jones, for Essex, suggested a journey time of 115 minutes from Grosvenor Square to Stansted. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, op. cit., pp. 36-7.

sented suggested that the alternative sites would be more favourable than Stansted. Mr. Hutchings suggested a journey time of 60 minutes to Padworth from central London,¹ while Mr. Jones suggested 90 minutes to Cliffe and no difference between the journey times to Stansted and to Sheppey.²

Stansted's use as the Third London Airport would have disadvantages on aviation grounds because according to Mr. Stratford, for NWEEHPA, Stansted was in an unfavourable position as "it is too far out for short haul operations, on the wrong side of the urban mass for predominately south oriented flights, and on the wrong side of London for the important future supersonic transport service, which will demand the minimum restrictive subsonic mileage."³ His great fear about the establishment of Stansted as the Third London Airport was "that like Gatwick, Prestwick, and Shannon, the location is unlikely to draw a commercially adequate traffic in passengers or in cargo which would justify the immense investment involved."⁴ Captain James Percy, for NWEEHPA, argued that with the advent of supersonic aircraft, the national interest would be best served by placing the airport west of Heathrow. In this case, Padworth would have great directional advantages, and had the possibility of a potential build up to a higher level

1. The Stansted Public Inquiry Report, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

2. Ibid., pp. 36-7.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 14 January, 1966.

4. Ibid.

of utilization than Stansted as it was well placed to cater for air traffic flows North, South and West.¹

The local pressure groups were able to achieve a considerable deal of success at the public inquiry. First, they were able to show there were substantial reasons on national and local grounds why Stansted itself should not be the site. Second, they were able to point to inconsistencies in the Ministry's case as presented to the inquiry. Third, and perhaps most important, they were able to show the Government's case was inadequate as they had failed to consider all the aspects and implications of the question, especially planning questions. Fourth, by presenting alternative sites they were able to show that there were alternatives which should have been investigated before the final decision was made. Their major achievement at the public inquiry was to convince the Inspector and Mr. Brancker that the Government had not proved its case for Stansted and that no recommendation for Stansted should be made as the question needed further investigation. This point is crucial. If they had failed in this, it would have meant the end of the controversy, however weak the case for Stansted might have been in reality, because a report recommending Stansted as the site would have put the local pressure groups in a weak position if they wanted to campaign against a Government decision based upon that recommendation. But because the Inspector did not recommend Stansted and accepted

1. Harlow Gazette, 14 January, 1966.

0 a major proportion of the case of the local pressure groups, they were in a strengthened position as they had powerful backing for their position from someone who had heard all the evidence, which the local pressure groups could quote if they were then engaged in campaigning against a Government decision for Stansted. They achieved their tactical objectives at the public inquiry because they were able to convince the Inspector that he could not recommend Stansted and because they were able to show that the Ministry case for Stansted was inadequate. But they failed, as events turned out, to achieve their strategic objective of preventing a decision which confirmed Stansted as the choice. But the results of the public inquiry were to have an important bearing upon pressure group action once this Government decision had been made in May 1967, as they strengthened the position of the local pressure groups.

0 The period between the end of the public inquiry in February 1966 and May 1967 was a period of inactivity on the part of the local pressure groups because they had now to wait for the Government's decision before they could take any further action.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

**THE STANSTED CONTROVERSY : INFLUENCE EXERTED
AND PRESSURE APPLIED (2) MAY 1967 - MARCH 1969.****STRATEGY 1967-1968**

The decision which the local pressure groups had been waiting for came with the statement in May 1967 that the Government intended to proceed with the construction of the Third London Airport at Stansted once the necessary Parliamentary approval had been secured. Normally, such a decision would have ended the controversy as it was usual for the Government to proceed without opposition once the public inquiry stages were complete. But in this case, the Government's handling of the results of the public inquiry, including the Inspector's report and the way in which they reached their decision, provoked opposition from the local pressure groups. This meant that the Government was not to be allowed to develop Stansted without considerable active opposition on the part of the local pressure groups. This opposition was provoked by the Government because the local pressure groups considered that the Government's behaviour was contrary to every assurance that they had given the local pressure groups before the public inquiry. The local pressure groups had been told to present their case to the public inquiry and it then would be fully considered by the Government. They had also been assured that lack of time

would not be used as an excuse to avoid a full investigation of alternative sites, if the Inspector recommended that course. The local pressure groups felt that they had proved Stansted to be the wrong choice through their evidence at the public inquiry, only to find that the Government had disregarded their arguments and was now arguing that the choice had to be Stansted, as there was no time to hold another investigation into alternative sites. Quite simply, the local pressure groups felt that they had been deceived and cheated.

The Government decision therefore revived the controversy and gave it new shape. It was no longer an issue of tentative proposals put forward by the Government for public discussion, but now one over a political decision to site the airport at Stansted, and over the way in which that decision had been reached. It was therefore no longer purely a technical question but was now a political issue as well, and it was no longer a local issue but a national one. This meant that the local pressure groups were faced with and operated in a different situation in this period. This called for a new strategy of influence if they were to achieve their overall objective of preventing the development of Stansted. They were no longer faced with convincing a public inquiry of the validity of their objections against Stansted on the basis of technical arguments and evidence, but instead they were now faced with a situation in which they had to convince the Government to reverse a decision which had been taken by the Cabinet and which the Government and the Minister were prepared to uphold. To seek

a reversal of the Government's position, as the local pressure groups were in effect to do, was to seek another political decision. This could only be achieved through political action, which meant they needed to adopt a strategy which was aimed at using the channels of influence to put the maximum amount of political pressure upon the Government if they were to have any chance of success in achieving their objective.

The new strategy, which the local pressure groups adopted in response to this new situation with which the Government had confronted them, involved taking political action to gain their objectives. They decided to mount a political campaign for a new inquiry by taking action through Parliament and mass and specialized public opinion. Their strategy involved using these channels of influence to put pressure upon the Executive, which was their prime target of influence in this phase. Their strategy now involved the co-ordination of their resources and efforts through the Stansted Working Party. This also involved working closely with the local MPs who had now become involved in the controversy as the Parliamentary leaders of the local opposition to Stansted. At the same time, they mounted a campaign of public protest which was designed to mobilize local and national public support. Its aim was to convince the Government and members of both Houses of Parliament that there was considerable public concern both locally and nationally over the issue and that this concern provided grounds for a new inquiry.

The strategy adopted by the individual local pressure groups involved working as part of this co-ordinated effort to gain a new inquiry. NWEHPA concentrated its attention upon gaining publicity and using public opinion as a channel to influence Parliament and the Government, while the County Councils, particularly Essex, provided the technical expertise needed to undertake the briefing of MPs and Peers. The local Councils again played a limited role because they could not provide the technical expertise needed and could not mobilize the local public as NWEHPA could. They expressed instead their views to the Government and Parliament and supported the campaign by voicing their opposition to Stansted.

THE USE OF THE CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE AND TACTICAL DECISIONS - 1967-1968

The Stansted Working Party

Faced with the Government decision, the leaders of the local pressure groups realized the need for co-ordinated political action if they were to have any chance of success in achieving their overall objective. At a meeting of representatives of the local pressure groups held in Chelmsford shortly after the Government decision was announced, it was decided to set up a small working party.¹ The

1. Its membership was composed of representatives of the different elements of the local opposition and included Mr. Peter Kirk and Mr. Stan Newens, who were local MPs, Sir Roger Hawkey, (later Mr. John Lukies), who represented NWEHPA, Brigadier T.J.F. Collins, who represented the Essex County Council and the Essex Councils, Miss L.A.M. Lloyd Taylor, who represented Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Councils, and Mr. John Walker, who represented the NFU and the amenity groups. Interview (Mr. J.S. Mills).

purpose of the Stansted Working Party was to co-ordinate the efforts of the local pressure groups and to undertake a political campaign against the Government decision.¹ Through Mr. J.S. Mills, the Essex Deputy Clerk, who acted as Secretary of the working party, they used the resources, technical experts and consultants of the local pressure groups. Within the framework of decisions agreed to by the working party, the different local pressure groups carried out different tasks. The Essex County Council provided the resources of technical information and experts. The officials and consultants of the Essex County Council also undertook the task of briefing Mr. Kirk, Mr. Newens and Lord Dilhorne on technical matters. NWEHPA was responsible for publicity and public relations. They were given the task of gaining as much publicity as possible both locally and nationally for the case against the decision and for the new inquiry.² The working party itself became a co-ordinator and a channel of communication between the different groups, and was especially important as a channel of communication between the local pressure groups and their Parliamentary leaders.

a) Mass Public Opinion

The use of mass public opinion as a channel of influence by the local pressure groups was an integral part of their campaign

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 19 May, 1967; and The Times, 25 May, 1967.

2. Interviews.

against the Government decision. They sought to generate national support for their position by publicizing their case against the decision and for a new inquiry, while at the same time they sought to mobilize their local support into action. They used this channel of influence to put pressure upon the Government and to influence members of both Houses of Parliament by showing them that there was considerable public support for their demand for a new inquiry. They hoped that the Government would see that a new inquiry was necessary as there was considerable public concern over this issue. They also hoped that members of both Houses would support, in their respective Houses, the demand for a new inquiry. The task of using and influencing mass public opinion was given to NWEHPA, which devoted most of its attention in this phase to carrying out this task.¹

NWEHPA's efforts to influence mass public opinion were directed to both the national and local levels during this phase of the controversy. Informal contacts among local people in the course of the life of the local community continued to play an important part in their attempts to influence local mass public opinion. But in this

1. They undertook this role because they had greater resources of manpower, which were needed for publicity-seeking activities, than did the Councils. There were also fewer restrictions placed upon them as to what they could do or on the ways in which they could seek publicity, since they were a private body. The Councils, although they were now acting as pressure groups, were still public authorities which had to be mindful of their responsibilities for their areas and as the representative of all their residents. Finally in any case, NWEHPA, which had mobilized a large number of supporters in the affected area previously, was better placed to mobilize local people than were the Councils.

phase, the rather more formal means of influencing public opinion gained in importance, especially at the national level. Besides their informal contacts in the local community, four main means were used to influence mass public opinion. First, they gained national and local publicity through their relations with the press. Second, they organized or sent representatives to public meetings. Third, they organized a number of publicity-seeking events and activities. Fourth, they produced publications and publicity literature which they distributed to the public or selected groups such as the press.

Their efforts at gaining publicity were organized on an amateur basis and were based upon the voluntary efforts of their organizers and supporters who were co-ordinated through Mrs. Susan Forsyth, NWEHPA's General Organizer.¹ This aspect of their activity in this phase, as in the previous one, lacked the professional help and expertise which they devoted to the preparation of their technical arguments. In fact, none of the local pressure groups employed public relations consultants or advertising agents to undertake their publicity campaign. They lacked the resources needed to employ these experts but much more important, their employment would have had a negative political effect. A major reason for the success of their publicity effort was the fact that it was an amateur effort based upon the enthusiasm of people who were strongly opposed to the airport and determined

1. Interview (Mrs. S. Forsyth).

to make this opposition clear to political decision-makers. A professional campaign would have ruined their best publicity point, namely that it was ordinary people who were protesting the destruction of their way of life in a high-handed manner by a bureaucratic government.

Great emphasis was placed upon relations with the press, especially the national press.¹ The task of gaining coverage in the national press was made much easier by the fact that much of the extensive coverage given the issue was unprompted, as this was an issue in which the national press had become interested. As the national press was campaigning on this issue, it meant that during the summer and autumn of 1967 they were receptive to news and stories on

1. Radio and television were also used whenever possible. Their coverage of the issue however, was not very extensive. They were not undertaking a campaign on the issue as the national press were. NWEHPA leaders and the MPs appeared on programmes at certain significant points in the controversy when the issue was topical and programmes such as '24 Hours' on BBC 1 and 'This Week' on ITV did a story on the question. The issue also had some coverage in documentary programmes such as Anglia TV's (an ITV station) 'The Stansted Affair' which was shown in December 1967. Because there was less coverage through the broadcast media, less attention was devoted to gaining publicity through this means. Interviews.

The differences in approach between the press and the broadcast media would make an interesting area for further research. These differences may be related to the fact that the Press do not have a tight programme schedule to follow and are therefore able to pursue particular stories with greater freedom than those working in broadcast media who are limited severely by the relatively small amount of time that is devoted to current affairs. In addition within this time space allotted to current affairs and news, there are often many other stories of more general national interest which would have priority from the national broadcast stations. In Britain perhaps pressure groups and particularly local pressure groups should concentrate their attention on gaining publicity through the press rather than the broadcast media. But it will be interesting to see how the new local (town) BBC radio stations will handle a situation such as the Stansted issue which was predominantly a locally based issue.

the Stansted issue.¹ Regular informal contact was maintained with journalists on the national press. They were given information about the attitudes and activities of the local pressure groups which they then used in writing their stories upon the Stansted issue. But no attempt was made to maintain such contact with the local press. The local press was not important as the issue was now a national one and the major part of the audience that NWEHPA sought to influence through this means was a national one. The local press had little part to play in mobilizing local people as many local people were more strongly and actively opposed to the airport than were the local press. In addition, local people could be reached daily through the national press and the London evening papers. They also used the Letters to the Editor column in the press to participate in the debate on this issue by answering particular points raised by other actors in the controversy and by appealing for support from crucial actors such as members of the House of Lords.

Public meetings provided another way in which they used and influenced mass public opinion. They organized their own protest meetings with the purpose of allowing local opposition to the Government decision to be expressed and as a means of gaining publicity which would reflect the degree of local opposition to the decision.

1. An issue of this nature, where people are fighting for their rights against the bureaucratic government machine, tends to be an issue that the national press likes to take up and it is the sort of issue that they will campaign on. Interview (Mr. Peter Kirk).

These meetings also gave the leaders of the campaign including Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens, the opportunity to encourage their supporters actively to oppose the Government decision by expressing their views directly to the decision-makers and their MPs.¹ In addition, NWEHHPA leaders attended meetings organized by other groups in different parts of the affected area, during which they urged their audiences to join in the fight against the decision.²

A number of publicity-seeking events and activities were organized to gain publicity and to show the degree of support they had. The most successful of these was the train trip and day in London which took place on the eve of the National Airports Policy debate in the House of Commons. NWEHHPA hired a train which carried the demonstrators from Stansted to London Victoria Station.³ Once they had

1. For instance, over 3,000 people attended the first protest meeting which was held in Dunmow in late May. Mr. Peter Kirk urged his audience to write to their MP, the Prime Minister and Mr. Jay. He urged them to "flood Downing Street with letters to show how angry you are. Let the powers that be know that this is not a small local protest but a national protest." Herts and Essex Observer, 2 June, 1967. Over 800 people attended a second protest meeting held in Bishop's Stortford in July. Ibid., 14 July, 1967. A protest meeting organized by Harlow UDC in mid June had an attendance in excess of 500 people. Harlow Citizen, 16 June, 1967.

2. Interview (Mr. John Lukies). For instance, Sir Roger Hawkey spoke to a meeting of the Sheering Labour Party, Harlow Gazette, 7 July, 1967, and Mr. Lukies spoke at a public meeting in High Wych. Harlow Citizen, 23 June, 1967.

3. They used the route which it was intended to use to provide the rail access to Stansted from central London. The Government estimated rail access time as 55 minutes. On this occasion it was planned to take 2½ hours, though it actually took 3 hours as the train broke down.

arrived in London, the more usual forms of protest were employed. These included a deputation which visited Mr. Jay, a lobby of MPs and a march to Downing Street where a wreath inscribed "In memory of democracy, strangled at Stansted 1967" was laid on the Prime Minister's doorstep. The day was rounded off with an evening appearance by Mr. Lukies and a large group of supporters on the BBC 1 current affairs show '24 Hours'. The result of their day's activity was that the national newspapers were full of reports and photos on the morning of the debate so that MPs were directly and indirectly shown that there was strong local opposition to the Government decision.¹

They also produced publicity literature and publications designed to gain support nationally and to mobilize local people to actively oppose the airport. The publicity literature included the usual round of leaflets, posters and stickers which were distributed locally and nationally. Posters and stickers were used on demonstrations, on houses and on cars as a means of showing the support they had.² Leaflets were also handed

1. Herts and Essex Observer, 30 June, 1967; Harlow Gazette, 30 June, 1967; Essex Weekly News, 30 June, 1967; The Guardian, 29 June, 1967 and The Times, 29 June, 1967. Their other publicity-seeking events included a car cavalcade through central London during a lull in the controversy in September, Herts and Essex Observer, 29 September, 1967, a stand at the Essex County Show, a canvass of commuters on the Bishop's Stortford London train, ibid., 23 June, 1967, and a shop in west London. Interview (Mrs. S. Forsyth). In addition, opposition to the airport provided the theme of Harlow UDC's stand at the Harlow Town Show. Daily Telegraph, 28 August, 1967.

2. The slogans on the posters produced during this period indicate clearly the changed concern of the local pressure groups from opposition to an airport at Stansted to opposition to the way in which the decision had been made in this case. For instance, their slogans included:- "Wrong decision taken against findings of Government's own Inspector." "IN NATIONAL INTEREST we demand an INDEPENDENT INQUIRY into the best location of EUROPE'S LARGEST AIRPORT NOW."

out at the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences.¹ In their single advert in the press they urged people to write to their MPs, Mr. Jay, the Prime Minister and "to any member of the House of Lords, stating your strong objections to the way the Government has ridden roughshod over all sensible comments."²

NWEEHPA's pamphlet, The Stansted Black Book, which was published at the end of October and widely distributed to MPs, Peers and the Press, was a major contribution to the campaign of the local pressure groups. This pamphlet contained two papers written by Mr. J.W.S. Brancker, who had been commissioned by NWEEHPA following his letter to The Times in July. The first of these papers was a critique of the Government White Paper and the second a call for the establishment of a national airports' policy. These made a contribution to the technical debate by further discrediting the Government's position. Much of what he said had been said before, but what was important was that by criticizing the Government in the way he did, he lent weight to the arguments of those already opposed to the Government. These papers provided an expression of opposition to the Government from someone whom the Government must have re-

"NO Stansted Airport; PLANS BEFORE PLANES MR. JAY." "STANSTED AIRPORT STOP JAY WALKING OVER STANSTED." "CRICHEL DOWN' AGAIN We will not stand Established Officialdom beating down RIGHTS of the PEOPLE." NWEEHPA files.

1. Interviews.

2. Herts and Essex Observer, 2 June, 1967.

spected and had confidence in, as they had employed him as their Technical Assessor at the public inquiry. In addition, they were published at a time at the end of October and at the end of the lull brought by the summer recess when new means were needed to maintain pressure upon the Government. These papers helped in this respect by bringing another specialist on the issues involved out into public opposition to the Government.

In his papers, Mr. Brancker showed that there was a need for a new inquiry because there were doubts about Stansted upon grounds of cost comparisons between different sites, noise and access and because the White Paper proposals were substantially different from those for the public inquiry. In his view there was time for a new inquiry because Government estimates on the timing of the need for the new airport were very conservative, having, for instance, underestimated the fact that the increase in aircraft size would lower the number of movements needed to carry the same number of passengers.¹ There was a need for an investigation of all the sites including those previously rejected and a need not to allow currently stated defence needs to override long term transport necessities.² He thought that the Third London Airport could not be considered in isolation because its location must inevitably form part of a broad development plan. He called for research to establish a National Airports Policy and Plan which would

1. The Stansted Black Book, op. cit., p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

be based upon anticipated air traffic, population density and industrial and commercial development needs. Failure to do this would result in further 'Stansted' crises.¹

NWEEHPA used these means as part of the campaign against the Government decision and for the new inquiry. In their efforts, they tried to show that there was an urgent need for the new inquiry that they demanded. The arguments which they put forward to support this demand were mainly concerned with political issues related to Government decision-making in this case rather than with the technical issues involved in the choice of Stansted as the location of the new airport. They argued that Stansted's suitability had not been proved because the problem had not been fully investigated by the Government. The issue needed much more investigation than that which it had had and the best solution was a full, fair and independent inquiry.

They attempted to show that this was necessary because the Government's and BAA's cases were discredited. First of all the conduct of the Government, especially its handling of the Inspector's report, gave major cause for complaint. They had not been given a fair deal by the Government as it had disregarded all its earlier assurances and promises in making the decision. Their case had not been given the full consideration that the Government had promised it would have.²

Indeed, the public inquiry had been "revealed as an expensive farce."³

1. Ibid., pp. 18-24.

2. Stansted, the Tragedy of Bad Planning. A NWEEHPA leaflet issued in 1967.

3. The Times, 19 May, 1967.

Instead, the decision had been made as the result of pressures behind the scenes from BAA and other aviation interests, even though they (the local pressure groups) had won a victory against the Ministry at the public inquiry.¹ They particularly attacked the way in which the 'establishment' behind the Minister could still, through the secret review, apparently prevail without any of the objectors being able to challenge the evidence of these officials, especially when that evidence had been shown to be defective before the public inquiry.²

Secondly, they attacked the Government's approach to the issue as being too narrow. The Government had failed to consider all the planning aspects of the problem. Indeed the principles of intelligent long range planning had been sacrificed for the sake of the narrow and expedient views of BAA amongst others.³ At the same time they had also failed to consult the South East Economic Planning Council which was the major planning body concerned about Stansted. "It is almost unbelievable that, in what is probably the most important planning decision of a generation, Government decisions have been taken without

1. Daily Telegraph, 17 May, 1967. From the earlier discussion of decision-making in Chapter Four it is clear that aviation interests had considerable influence in the making of the decision. The evidence to support this contention of the local pressure groups is of a circumstantial nature, but nonetheless further research on this point would, I suspect, prove that the local pressure groups were right. There is no evidence to show clearly that the Government had given more than the most scant attention to issues other than the aviation ones.

2. Ibid., 23 June, 1967.

3. The Times, 19 May, 1967.

planning experts (other than local ones) being heard."¹ Third, not only was the Government's approach inadequate, their handling of their own case was inconsistent, which made a new inquiry even more urgent. For instance, the speech of Lord Kennet in the House of Lords debate on Stansted was attacked because of its inconsistencies on matters such as the costs of different sites and of the removal of the firing ranges at Shoeburyness.²

They also criticized the role and actions of BAA and its Chairman, Mr. Peter Masefield. They attacked his participation in the controversy as it was not his job to decide where the airport should be located, but only to operate it once it had been built.³ But what was worse, many of his statements bore "the all too familiar pattern of complete inaccuracy, which has featured the utterances of those who have tried and are still trying to justify the choice of Stansted after a prolonged public inquiry had found against the suitability of the site."⁴ For example, they criticized his view that there was no time for a new inquiry as the need for the airport was urgent and they quoted Mr. Brancker in support of their contention that there was time for a new inquiry.⁵ They also attacked BAA for taking a narrow aviation view

1. Daily Telegraph, 6 November, 1967.

2. Ibid., 19 December, 1967.

3. Evening Standard, 14 June, 1967; and Daily Telegraph, 29 December, 1967.

4. Evening Standard, 14 June, 1967.

5. Daily Telegraph, 15 February, 1968.

of the question and for failing to consider the wider issues concerned with planning and amenity.¹

In the latter part of 1967 NWEHHA had two other concerns as well. They wanted to show that the controversy and the battle over Stansted were far from over in spite of the Government's determination to proceed with the airport's development. Second, they focused their attention upon trying to convince members of the House of Lords to vote against the Special Development Order. They based their appeal to Peers upon the grounds that they were custodians of the rights of the individual and that the protection of these rights necessitated the House of Lords using its veto power to stop the development of Stansted by refusing to approve the Special Development Order.²

Their use of mass public opinion was a successful and important part of the campaign. By their own efforts they were able to mobilize local people and many people in other parts of the country to write to MPs, Peers and Ministers expressing their opposition to the development of Stansted without a further inquiry. One of the remarkable features of the Stansted Controversy at this stage was the very large postbag that was received by Ministers, MPs and Peers. This indicated that there was considerable concern among ordinary people besides the concern that was expressed in the press and by other national groups. The essential ingredient of the success of the local pressure groups in

1. Evening Standard, 14 June, 1967.

2. For instance, the letters of Sir Roger Hawkey in the Daily Telegraph, 15 November and 19 December, 1967.

using mass public opinion was their ability to mobilize individuals to protest. These individual protests cumulatively added up to a substantial mass protest which was an important element in the pressure that was brought to bear upon the Government.

b) Parliament

The other integral part of the campaign against the Government decision was the use of Parliament as a channel of influence through which direct pressure could be put upon the Government. In fact, Parliament became important as both a channel and a target of influence. It was a channel of influence because pressure could be put upon the Government by enlisting the support of sympathetic MPs and Peers who could raise the issue and organize opposition in their respective Houses. But Parliament, especially the House of Lords, was an important target of influence because Parliamentary approval was needed for the Special Development Order which would give BAA the authority to develop Stansted.¹

1. In this case, the House of Lords was especially important because there was a possibility that they might be persuaded to defeat the Special Development Order. Defeat in the Lords would have meant the defeat of the Stansted scheme, at least by means of a Special Development Order, because Special Development Orders needed to be approved by a positive vote in both Houses of Parliament. The Lords had in this case a veto because the provisions of the Parliament Acts with regard to the delaying and veto powers of the Lords did not apply. The looser party discipline that prevails in the House of Lords made it likely that Peers on all sides of the House would, once convinced that Stansted was wrong, vote against the Special Development Order. In the House of Lords it is more difficult for the Government to threaten its supporters because Peers are not dependent on the party for their seats. The local pressure groups, as will be shown later, made considerable efforts to ensure that the vote against the Special Development Order would be a bipartisan one, rather than the Conservative Opposition using their majority to defeat the Order. This situation where the Order would have been defeated by the Conservative Peers would have led to a Lords vs. Commons clash which the local pressure groups wanted to avoid. Indeed, they were preparing

The local pressure groups were in a strong position to use Parliament because they had the active support of local MPs who worked inside and outside Parliament to oppose the Government decision and to gain a new inquiry. In this case, Mr. Kirk (Conservative) and Mr. Newens (Labour) were not mere spokesmen for a particular interest but were the Parliamentary leaders of a regionally based protest campaign. Their activity at the Parliamentary level was a key part of the campaign against the Government decision.¹ As a result, the local pressure groups had a direct channel into the House of Commons. Through the Stansted Working Party, they developed a co-ordinated

to force a vote in the Lords first so that it could not be said that the defeat of the Order was a case of the Lords overruling the democratic will of the people as expressed through the House of Commons. Interviews.

1. Both Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens were strongly opposed to the development of Stansted and to the way in which the Government had handled the issue. While constituency interests dictated that they should oppose the airport, both had other reasons for their opposition. Mr. Newens considered the national and regional arguments to be more important than the local ones. As a Socialist, on the left of the Labour Party, he placed great emphasis upon proper economic and regional planning. On these grounds Stansted did not make sense to him as its development would introduce development into an area which was one of the few remaining belts of rural countryside around London. Interview. He thought that the Government had not considered all the aspects of the problem and that they had not shown that it was necessary on national grounds to develop Stansted. Harlow Gazette, 7 July, 1967; Herts and Essex Observer, 14 July, 1967 and Harlow Citizen, 17 November, 1967. Mr. Kirk's reasons for opposition were similar because he thought that there had been inadequate consideration of all the issues involved. Sunday Times, 28 May, 1967. He considered that the local people had been shamefully treated in the making of the decision. Daily Telegraph, 26 May, 1967 and The Times, 27 May, 1967. He thought that a full, fair and independent inquiry into all the issues and alternative sites was needed before the airport was developed. Evening Standard, 22 February, 1967.

campaign inside and outside Parliament. Later through the efforts of Mr. Kirk, Mr. Newens and Members of NWEHPA, links and contacts were established with members of the House of Lords, particularly Lord Dilhorne.¹ He was to work on behalf of the opposition to Stansted organizing activity in the Lords during the latter part of 1967 and early 1968.²

Initially attention was focused upon the Commons because an early debate was anticipated on the White Paper. This should have been followed by debates and votes in both Houses on the Special Development Order either before or shortly after the summer recess. Initially therefore, the local pressure groups faced a situation where an early impact had to be made in the House of Commons if they were to show the Government that there was considerable opposition to their decision. An early impact was also necessary to gain some momentum to the Parliamentary side of the campaign. Considerable effort was devoted therefore during the late spring and the early summer of 1967 to influencing MPs on this issue and using the Commons to put pressure upon the Government. While these efforts were being undertaken, either by design or luck, they were able to gain badly needed time as a result of the Essex County Council Court case

1. Interview. Lord Dilhorne was the Lord Chancellor in the Conservative Government from 1962-1964.

2. Interviews.

against the Minister of Housing and Local Government.¹ The result was that, although Essex lost the case, the Government was unable to present the Special Development Order before the summer recess. During the summer recess political events, which included the replacement of Mr. Jay by Mr. Crosland as President of the Board of Trade and the growth of opposition to the Government on this issue, served to further postpone the introduction of the Special Development Order. This delay together with yet another postponement which resulted from the decision to realign the runways, enabled the local pressure groups

1. At the beginning of June 1967, the Essex County Council undertook legal action against the Minister of Housing and Local Government on the grounds that his action in deciding to grant planning permission to BAA was 'ultra vires' because his actions since the closing of the public inquiry were contrary to the rules of natural justice. In the end the case was struck out of the High Court at the end of July, but not before it had had some important political consequences in the Stansted controversy. In fact, the impending court case, by design or not, delayed Government actions to implement the decision because the Government waited for the results of the case. This meant that, apart from the debate on National Airports Policy which took place upon an Opposition motion, nothing was done until the autumn as the summer recess also intervened. In the meantime pressure against the Government was built up by the local pressure groups and other groups. The major consequences of this delay was that the Government was unable to implement the scheme before pressure had built up. It is not clear whether Essex County Council undertook this case merely to gain this needed delay, or because it thought that it had a genuine legal case. Different points of view on this issue were put by the different participants interviewed. The politicians saw it as a useful tactic in the political battle, while Mr. Mills, Essex's Deputy Clerk, who is a lawyer by training and concerned with planning law in his job with Essex, saw the move as a legal one concerned with a point of law, namely the procedure adopted by the Minister with regard to new evidence after the closure of a public inquiry. The impression gained on this point by the author from his interviews is that they were all aware of both the legal and political implications and points of the move and were in favour of it, though perhaps for different reasons. Interviews.

to devote their energies to developing contacts with and organizing opposition in the House of Lords.

1) The House of Commons

There were two aspects to the use of the House of Commons by the local pressure groups during this phase of the controversy. First, they influenced individual MPs on this issue to gain their support. This was done by briefing MPs upon the arguments for the new inquiry while at the same time influencing them by showing them that there was considerable local and national concern over this issue. Second, through the efforts of Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens in the House of Commons, they attempted to enlist and organize sympathetic MPs to help put pressure upon the Government.

The local pressure groups devoted considerable attention to briefing MPs on this issue.¹ In preparation for the National Airports Policy debate, the Stansted Working Party produced a detailed briefing paper which they circulated to all MPs.² This report contained an outline of the case for the new inquiry including details of the objections of the local pressure groups to the Government's handling of the issue. It also contained detailed criticisms of the White Paper and a series of technical reports upon questions such as road communications, noise,

1. The major part of this task was undertaken through the Stansted Working Party using the technical experts employed by the Essex County Council.

2. The Stansted Working Party, The Third London Airport -- The case for Re-appraisal. Chelmsford: June 1967.

education and agriculture which were involved in the issue of Stansted.¹ Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens organized a teach-in at the House of Commons in which Brigadier Collins and a team of experts put the arguments for the new inquiry to an audience of over 100 MPs.² On another occasion, in a special attempt to brief Labour MPs, this same group of experts attended a meeting of the Aviation Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party.³ Special attention was devoted to attempting to brief Labour MPs because it was important that pressure be put upon the Government by having a group of MPs on the Government's backbenches who were opposed to its decision. In the end, this was created to a degree through individual contact rather than formal briefings. MPs were also briefed by NWEHPA, which sent a memorandum to all MPs in June supporting the call for a new inquiry and outlining their objections to the Government decision.⁴ More important, all MPs received copies of The Stansted Black Book containing Mr. Brancker's detailed critique of the Government's White Paper and his call for the establishment of a national airports' policy and plan.

Through their briefing of MPs the local pressure groups attempted

1. Ibid.

2. Financial Times, 21 June, 1967.

3. Interviews. As events worked out this was not a particularly successful meeting for the airport opponents, as they did not have much time in which to put their point of view. Most of the time had been taken by Mr. Masfield of BAA. In any case most of the Aviation Group's members were in favour of the airport at Stansted and supporters of Mr. Masfield. Interviews.

4. The Times, 21 June, 1967.

to convince MPs that the way in which the Stansted decision was reached was unsatisfactory and necessitated a new inquiry. Their case for this new inquiry was based upon a two-pronged attack. The major part of this attack was a criticism of the way in which the Government had approached the issue and the way in which it had reached the decision. They were unhappy with the Government's claim that it had followed the Inspector's recommendation because "it is not apparent either that the Committee, as such, was set up even within the Government, still less that the investigation was by a Committee equally interested in traffic in the air, traffic on the ground and regional planning and national planning, as well as military and civil aviation."¹ They also attacked the Government's secret review. They considered that it was unfair to the objectors because through it, officials, whose arguments and evidence had been proved defective at the public inquiry, were able to rebuild their case using new evidence which the local pressure groups were not given the opportunity to challenge. Equally objectionable was the fact that the four runway proposals of the White Paper differed in substance from the two runway proposals of the public inquiry. In reality, the Government was using a new set of proposals, on which there had been no public inquiry, as the basis of its decision to develop Stansted.²

1. The Third London Airport — The case for Re-appraisal, op. cit., p. 2.

2. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

The crux of the problem was to find the best long term solution from the national point of view. The Government, by the procedures that it had adopted, did not have all the latest established facts and the best uncommitted professional advice when deciding to locate the Third London Airport at Stansted. It was difficult for civil servants who had originally proposed Stansted to have an unbiased approach to evaluating the merits of conflicting scientific and professional opinions. In view of the fact that the past choices of Heathrow and Gatwick had proved to be unsuitable sites, "it is most important that there should be a fresh start on the problems of London and, indeed the Nation's Airports"¹ This should be based upon a full inquiry, preferably by a Royal Commission, which has wide terms of reference and full power to call for evidence and to commission research so that all the possible sites can be fairly weighed against each other.² They would only accept Stansted if it could be proved through an independent inquiry that its development was in the national interest.³

The second prong of their attack, while briefing MPs, was to make technical criticisms of the Stansted site itself and to criticize the Government's technical arguments which were contained in the White Paper. Much of this repeated their earlier arguments and evidence, which were presented at the public inquiry, on matters such as

1. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid.

regional planning, noise, surface access, agricultural land loss and change in the character of the area. One new issue arose because for the first time, in the White Paper, the Government had produced some figures on the costs of the various sites. These were vigorously attacked by the local pressure groups as the "paragraphs in the White Paper dealing with costs . . . are among the least satisfactory of all. The estimates are incomplete, and the figures included are themselves open to challenge"1 They considered that a full cost/benefit analysis of the selected alternative sites was needed. The absence of the type of information produced by a cost/benefit analysis was one of the strongest arguments for a further investigation by an independent inquiry. "To proceed to a decision on figures like those quoted in the White Paper leaves far too much to guesswork."2

The second aspect of the local pressure groups' approach to influencing MPs was their attempt to convince individual MPs that there was a need for this new inquiry because there was considerable local and national unrest on the issue. This involved making MPs aware of the fact that there was indeed extensive local and national unrest on this issue. This was done through the leaders of the local pressure

1. Ibid., p. 12. For instance, the cost of the removal of the firing ranges at Shoeburyness and interference with Southend Airport were included in the Sheppey estimates, while no figures were quoted to represent loss of agricultural land and production, the cost of moving or soundproofing homes and schools, or the cost of the removal of the Wethersfield Air Base which would be needed if the new airport were located at Stansted.

2. Ibid., p. 13.

groups time and time again urging both local people and others to write to their MPs on this subject. The result was an extremely heavy post-bag on this issue for MPs.¹ Individual local people also lobbied MPs during the demonstration in London on the eve of the National Airports Policy Debate. During the summer many of the local pressure groups themselves wrote directly to their MPs.² In the latter part of the year they adopted another means of showing MPs that there was considerable local opposition. From the beginning of November through to February 1968, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Newens and Sir Derek Walker Smith presented petitions calling for a new inquiry from the local Councils to the House of Commons.³

1. Many MPs, with seats miles away from Stansted and whose constituents were not affected by an airport at Stansted, received letters from their constituents opposing the Government decision on Stansted. Both Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens said that other MPs had told them that they had received more letters on the question of Stansted than they had on any other topics, other than constituency ones, for many years. Interviews. Mr. Peter Bessell (Liberal - Cornwall, Bodmin) also confirmed a very heavy correspondence with none in favour of the proposals, including a large number from his own constituents who could not be affected by the airport at Stansted. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 749, 29 June, 1967, Col. 836.

2. For instance, Hertfordshire County Council sent a copy of their protest to the Government to all the County's MPs, Herts and Essex Observer, 2 June, 1967, while Sawbridgeworth UDC sent a copy of its resolution opposing the airport to local MPs. Harlow Citizen, 9 June, 1967.

3. In all 9 local Councils presented petitions signed under their seals. These included: Sawbridgeworth UDC, Hansard (Commons), Vol. 754, 16 November, 1967, Col. 603; Dunmow RDC, ibid., Vol. 755, 27 November, 1967, Col. 1; Bishop's Stortford, ibid., Vol. 755, 5 December, 1967, Col. 1105; Saffron Walden RDC, ibid., Vol. 756, 18 December, 1967, Col. 887; Saffron Walden BC, ibid., Vol. 759, 19 February, 1968, Cols. 1-2; Epping and Ongar RDC, Harlow Citizen, 3 November, 1967; Harlow UDC, Harlow Gazette, 11 November, 1967, Chigwell UDC, Financial Times, 11 November, 1967, and Braughing RDC, Saffron Walden Weekly News, 19 January, 1968.

Their other use of the House of Commons was to enlist and organize sympathetic MPs and to use the procedures of the House to put pressure upon the Government. This was done through informal contacts with other MPs by Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens in a bipartisan approach. They used several means to put pressure upon the Government. In terms of its impact the Early Day Motion (EDM) which Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens organized was the most successful effort at pressuring the Government. Mr. Newens on the Labour side and Mr. Kirk on the Conservative side worked hard to collect signatures for a motion which called for a new inquiry before Stansted was developed.¹ The result of their efforts was an EDM which had considerable impact. It was signed by over 280 MPs, including over 100 Labour MPs. This number of MPs, which was unusually high, included senior members of both the Labour and Conservative Parliamentary Parties. Senior members of the Parliamentary Parties included the Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Mr. Douglas Houghton and the Chairman of the Conservative Backbenchers 1922 Committee, Sir Arthur Vere-Harvey. Through this EDM they showed

1. The motion asked "that, before any irrevocable decisions are taken on the siting of future airports, a new and realistic estimate of future needs should be prepared, with full consideration not only of the probable development of air traffic, but also of ground communications, agriculture, and the amenities of the countryside; notes that, with proper use of existing facilities, there is sufficient time for the preparation of such an estimate; and calls upon Her Majesty's Government not to proceed with a major expansion of Stansted Airport until all these matters have been more fully investigated by a Royal Commission, or some other appropriate body." House of Commons, Notices of Motions, 14 June, 1967.

the Government that there were a considerable number of MPs, including influential members on both sides of the House, who were convinced of the need for a new inquiry. Of special concern to the Government was the success of Mr. Newens in gaining over 100 signatures from the Labour backbenches.¹

A second means by which they attempted to pressure the Government was the National Airports Policy debate. In this debate, Mr. Kirk² and Mr. Newens³ again put the case against Stansted and for a new inquiry. They also attacked the further inconsistencies in the Government case which appeared during the course of Mr. Jay's speech. For instance, they attacked the costings given by the Government as being extremely 'primitive' and 'highly selective'. The Government's position on its own inadequate costings was inconsistent as Mr. Jay produced figures which were different from those included in the White Paper. But costs were not the only item upon which the Government had changed its position. For some unexplained reason the London starting point for estimating the access time to Stansted had been changed from Grosvenor Square to Liverpool Street. The same had happened with the noise question where the criteria for calculating the number of people affected by noise had changed from 3-4 miles in the White Paper to 10-12 miles in the debate.

1. Interviews.

2. Hansard (Commons), Vol. 749, 29 June, 1967, Cols. 816-828.

3. Ibid., Cols. 828-836.

The chief result of this debate was that they were again to show that the Government case for Stansted was weak and inconsistent. The debate gave them further examples on matters such as noise, access and costs of this weakness and inconsistency in the Government's case, which they could use when trying to influence others such as Peers to support the demand for the new inquiry. As a show of opposition to the Government the debate was not very successful, nor was it really expected to be so, for an element of party politics had entered into the debate. It had taken place on an Opposition supply day on an Opposition motion, to which the Government had tabled its own amendment. The Government, through the imposition of a 'three line whip,' was determined to have this amendment approved by a large majority to counteract the discontent shown by the EDM. The result was that while the Conservatives attacked the Government decision, most Labour MPs supported the Government even though they signed the EDM. There were a few exceptions, because besides Mr. Newens, Mrs. Renée Short attacked the Government decision in her speech¹ and joined Mr. Newens and eight other Labour MPs in abstaining.²

In the House of Commons, the local pressure groups could not hope to defeat a Government which was determined to implement its decision by using the 'whip' in the face of adverse publicity. But the local pressure groups could hope that by putting continual pressure

1. Ibid., Cols. 812-816.

2. The Guardian, 30 June, 1967.

upon the Government it would decide that the holding of a new inquiry was a more preferable course than having to face the probability that the Special Development Order would have an extremely rough passage in the House, which would gain the Government further adverse publicity. To succeed in pressuring the Government, they needed to create a bipartisan opposition in the House to the Government. At the same time they had to avoid at all costs allowing the issue to become one of Government vs. Opposition. If it was to become a party issue, their freedom to manoeuvre and their ability to gain support across party lines would be drastically diminished as MPs, particularly Government backbenchers, rallied to their respective parties. This would have isolated Mr. Newens and other Labour opponents of the Government and placed them in an intolerable political position, as they would have appeared to be supporting the Opposition in its attacks on their own Government. But on the other hand, they needed the Government to know that they could not count on any official support from the Opposition side of the House, as the Opposition were against the Government on the issue.

The situation that they faced therefore was a tricky one, but they managed to manoeuvre through it. They gained the support of the Shadow Cabinet through statements issued to the Press by Mr. Heath in June and November. These argued, in effect, that because there was considerable public opposition to the decision, there should be a full inquiry into all the aspects of the question before Stansted

was developed.¹ But though the Opposition issued these statements and initiated the National Airports Policy debate on a Supply Day, they left the initiative for action on this issue to the local MPs on their side of the House rather than use the issue as a weapon for attacking the Government.² This enabled the local Conservative MPs, led by Mr. Kirk, to act as concerned local MPs rather than as Conservatives opposing the Government. It also enabled them to join with other local MPs on the Labour side to create an all party lobby which then attempted to pressure the Government by enlisting support for their case.³

2) The House of Lords

The House of Lords assumed crucial importance in the controversy during the latter part of 1967 and the early part of 1968 because there was a possibility that the Stansted scheme might have been defeated by the House of Lords' rejecting the Special Development Order. In the autumn, when it was clear that the presentation of the Special Development Order could not be delayed much longer, the tactics which

1. Daily Telegraph, 16 June, 1967; The Times, 9 November, 1967.

2. This also enabled them to escape a vulnerable position because the Conservative Government, through Mr. Julian Amery, had accepted the Inter-Departmental Committee Report, which had since been proved inadequate, that Stansted was the right choice.

3. They created a situation in which they hoped to squeeze the Minister between the official opposition and his own backbenchers in a situation, which, according to S.E. Finer, made for a successful lobby, namely: (OPPOSITION + MINISTERIAL LOBBY) vs. MINISTERIALISTS = SUCCESS See: Anonymous Empire, op. cit., p. 75.

were adopted by the local pressure groups were to concentrate their efforts at the Parliamentary level upon influencing Peers and building up support in the Lords. This was done through establishing contacts with Peers on both sides of the House.¹ They sought to convince Peers of the need for a new inquiry in order that they could enlist sympathetic Peers to aid them in their efforts to pressure the Government through the House of Lords and finally in an effort to defeat the Special Development Order in the Lords if the Government had not withdrawn it.

The task of influencing Peers was undertaken through the Stansted Working Party and Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens. Most of their efforts were through informal personal contacts with Peers.² In addition they were sent copies of The Stansted Black Book and a special summary of the briefing paper which had been sent to MPs in June.³ They also attempted to influence Peers by showing them that there was considerable public unrest over the issue. The leaders of the local pressure groups urged people to write to Peers expressing their opposition to the Stansted decision. In addition, NWEHPA, through

1. These included Peers such as Lords Dilhorne and Leatherland. Lord Leatherland was a Labour Peer who was an Essex County Alderman and a former Chairman of the Essex County Council.

2. Interviews.

3. The Stansted Working Party; The Third London Airport — A summary of the case for a new investigation. Chelmsford: December 1967. This merely repeated the earlier arguments for a new inquiry which the realignment proposals would make even more urgent. People previously unaffected were now affected and were being given no opportunity to put their objections to a public inquiry.

the Letters to the Editor column of the national newspapers, made a direct appeal to Peers to vote against the Special Development Order.

The House of Lords was used as a means of putting pressure upon the Government by showing them that there was considerable opposition to the Government decision and support for a new inquiry on all sides of the House. In this regard, the debate in the Lords in December was extremely important for it showed clearly that there was extensive opposition to the Government in that House. Most of the Peers who spoke in this debate wanted a new inquiry. The few Peers who supported the Stansted decision did so reluctantly because they did not like the way in which the Government handled the case. Again in this debate the Government case was shown to be inadequately based and inconsistent. The debate therefore showed that the Peers were unhappy about the situation and that the Government was going to have difficulty in passing the Special Development Order in the Lords. By February it was clear, especially after the rejection of the realignment proposals by the local pressure groups, that the Government faced a serious possibility that the Special Development Order would in fact be rejected by the Lords. This possibility of defeat in the Lords was a major factor contributing to the Government decision to hold a new inquiry rather than to be humiliated by the Lords' rejecting the Special Development Order.

c) The Administration

Again in this phase of the controversy the local pressure groups made little use of the Administration¹ as a channel of influence. The conflict of objectives between the Administration and the local pressure groups which prevented a close relationship in the previous phase continued throughout this phase. The Administration were not interested in hearing the points that the local pressure groups were making because they were still committed to Stansted as the site for the new airport.²

The only contact of the local pressure groups with the Administration was to reply to a circular containing the realignment proposals which was sent to them by officials of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in January 1968. Their replies were unanimous in their disapproval of these proposals and in their reiteration of their demand for a new inquiry. Indeed, they considered the case for the new inquiry was made more urgent by the realignment proposals because new people previously unaffected were not being given the opportunity to put their objections before a public inquiry.³ These replies were important to the controversy because they were one of the contributory factors in the Government decision to hold a new inquiry. It was clear to the Government that only a new inquiry would satisfy the local pres-

1. In this case mainly officials of the aviation section of the Board of Trade and officials of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

2. Interviews.

3. Herts and Essex Observer, 26 January, 9 and 16 February, 1968.

sure groups and that any further attempts to press ahead with Stansted would bring further bad publicity and continued opposition from the local pressure groups who were clearly intent on maintaining their demand for a new inquiry and keeping the pressure upon the Government until they were granted it.

d) Specialized Public Opinion

With one exception, very little attempt was made to influence specialized public opinion. This was because, as was seen in Chapter Five, many of the groups which constituted specialized public opinion in this case, were expressing their opposition to the Government decision from the perspective of their specialized interests without being prompted by the local pressure groups. But on the other hand the local pressure groups used these expressions of opposition as support for their position that a new inquiry was needed in these efforts to pressure the Government in granting them a new inquiry. The exception was the case of the Council on Tribunals, which is the watchdog on matters relating to inquiries and tribunals. NWEHPA complained to the Council on Tribunals about the Government review, involving new evidence, after the closure of the public inquiry and their failure to involve the objectors to the proposals. At this stage the Council considered that the case did not come within their jurisdiction as the public inquiry had not been a statutory one. Following their realignment proposals further complaints were received by the Council from NWEHPA

and members of the House of Lords connected with the local pressure groups. The result this time was that the Council considered that it did have jurisdiction and issued a report arguing that there had to be a public inquiry for those not previously affected to have an opportunity to put their objections.¹

e) The Executive

The relationship between the local pressure groups and the Executive, although not one of direct contact, continued to be the prime relationship around which the controversy was developed. The Executive was the primary target of influence for the local pressure groups because they wanted to reverse a Cabinet decision to develop Stansted. They made no attempt to influence the Executive directly. For instance, no briefing papers were sent to the Cabinet or Ministers. The tactic with regard to the Executive was to use the other channels of influence to pressure the Executive into granting the new inquiry. The responses and actions of the Executive were as a result important factors in determining the actions of the local pressure groups. The Government's response determined the degree of success or failure that the local pressure groups had in achieving their objectives.

The continued and sustained pressure that the local pressure groups put upon the Government in this phase stemmed from the fact

1. The Council on Tribunals. The Annual Report of the Council on Tribunals for 1967. London: HMSO, 1968, pp. 26-29.

that the Government held to its decision to develop Stansted and did not grant the local pressure groups the new inquiry which they were asking for. At first during the summer of 1967 while Mr. Jay was at the Board of Trade, the Government and Mr. Jay were determined to proceed with the development of Stansted without any alterations. Indeed, their stance at this time was a dogmatic one. After the development of considerable opposition to the Government and after the arrival in the autumn of Mr. Crosland at the Board of Trade, the Government's stand became a less dogmatic defence of their decision.

The realignment proposals introduced some limited flexibility into the Government's position in so far as they were prepared to modify the proposals for development at Stansted. But this did not involve any change in the basic intention to develop Stansted. The basic change which resulted in a decision to hold a new inquiry came only when it was clear to the Government that it would have great difficulty in passing the Special Development Order through Parliament and that its determination to proceed would only result in further adverse publicity. The Government in effect gave way to the local pressure groups when they found that they had been forced into an untenable political position where the political cost of proceeding with the development was too high for the Government. The relationship between the Executive and the local pressure groups, which had developed in this phase, was one of political combat. The local pressure groups achieved their objectives of a new inquiry because in this political battle they had been able to

make the cost of achieving its objectives too high for their opponents.

STRATEGY 1968-1969

The Government decision for a new inquiry meant in effect that, although they did not know the exact form the new inquiry was to take, they had achieved the objective of the political campaign which they had undertaken. The strategy of mounting a political campaign had been successful. As a result of this Government decision, they were now faced with a new situation which necessitated another change in their strategy of influence. The need had now reverted back to that of being able to organize a strong technical case, which was based upon the arguments and evidence of experts, for presentation to the inquiry. In fact, they were now in a position which was similar in its strategic needs to that of the initial phase of the controversy.

The new strategy of influence adopted by the local pressure groups was based upon an attempt to convince the Commission, through the presentation of technical cases, that Stansted was not suitable as the site for the new airport, and that there were other sites which were more suitable that should be investigated by the Commission. The local pressure groups also needed to ensure that the inquiry would be a full, fair and independent inquiry, in line with their demands. Their strategy during this phase of the controversy, therefore, was centered upon the use of the Roskill Commission. The decision of the Roskill Commission not to short-list Stansted meant that the local pres-

sure groups had achieved their overall objective and the end of the Stansted controversy.

THE USE OF THE CHANNELS OF INFLUENCE AND TACTICAL DECISIONS — 1968-1969

The use of the channels of influence revolved around the need to prepare their cases for presentation to the Roskill Commission. Their activity centered largely upon the Roskill Commission which had now become the prime target of influence. There was little or no use of other channels of influence because the need at this stage was the preparation of their case. As in the previous phase, the Stansted Working Party continued to play a co-ordinating role. Through the Stansted Working Party, a broadly co-ordinated case was developed so that the efforts and time of the local pressure groups and the Commission would not be wasted by unnecessary duplication of arguments and evidence.

a) Mass Public Opinion

NWEEHPA used mass public opinion during this phase of the controversy as a means of raising much needed money to finance their case against Stansted before the Roskill Commission.¹ As public opinion already supported their position, the need now was to try to persuade the public to support them financially. In order to obtain

1. Fundraising was also going on through NWEEHPA's own organization without the use of mass public opinion. The use of mass public opinion was only one of the ways used to raise the needed money.

this money, NWEHPA launched an appeal which received publicity in the local and national press.¹ They also gained publicity for their appeal through the town and country shows, carnivals and mass events which took place in East Anglia during the summer.² In this appeal, they asked for money so that they could win the last round of the Stansted battle.

b) The Executive

There was some contact with the Executive on behalf of all the local pressure groups by their leading Parliamentary supporters, such as Mr. Kirk, Mr. Newens and Lord Dilhorne, about the exact nature of the inquiry and its terms of reference, but this took place only within the general context of the consultations that were held between the Government, who were most anxious to obtain an inquiry which would be acceptable to all the objectors, and the Opposition (Conservative Party) in Parliament, as well as other interested parties.³ In these consultations, they sought to gain an inquiry which would cover all the aspects of the question of a new London airport, including its need, timing and possible alternative sites. In addition they wanted a form of inquiry

1. Saffron Walden Weekly News, 1 March, 1968, Braintree and Witham Times, 1 and 8 March, 1968, and Herts and Essex Observer, 1 March, 1968. On the national level, the Treasurer wrote a letter to the Daily Telegraph appealing for its readers to contribute to their funds. This letter raised over £ 300 in contributions from people who lived outside the Stansted area. Daily Telegraph, 19 March, 1968 and Interviews.

2. Harlow Citizen, 23 August, 1968 and Interviews.

3. Interviews.

which allows all objectors to any site the opportunity to cross-examine all the experts, especially those of the Ministry or BAA, in order that their evidence may be seen in public to be able to stand up to cross-examination.

c) The Roskill Commission

Under the procedures laid down by the Government, the Roskill Commission was to undertake its work in five stages.¹ In the first stage it was to call for proposals of sites, which should be considered by the Commission, together with detailed evidence on these proposed sites. The second stage was a series of local inquiries to hear objections to the sites that the Commission had short-listed for consideration. These were to be conducted as local planning inquiries by a Senior Planning Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government who was a member of the Commission. This procedure which was adopted by the Commission and the decisions, taken in the Stansted Working Party about their approach to the Commission, determined the actions of most of the local pressure groups with regard to the Commission and its work. Through the Stansted Working Party, it had been decided that the task of presenting the case against Stansted would be the responsibility of NWEEHPA, while the County Councils, who had decided to work together, would be responsible for presenting proposals for the alternative sites. Both NWEEHPA and the County

1. For details of the Roskill Commission, see p. 118-121 above.

Councils used consultants, experts and legal advisers in preparing their cases for presentation to the Commission.

NWEEHPA concentrated its efforts upon preparing for the local inquiry stage of the Commission. At this stage it intended to present the case against Stansted using a team of expert witnesses and legal counsel.¹ NWEEHPA did not focus much attention on the first stage of the Commission's work because they were concerned with presenting the case against Stansted. For the first stage they limited themselves to presenting a brief paper from Mr. Brancker and another short paper setting out their criteria for a suitable site.²

The County Councils, on the other hand, concentrated their attention upon preparing detailed cases and evidence for the alternative sites which they had proposed to the Commission. This evidence and the report which they submitted to the Commission was prepared by their own officials and consultants and covered questions such as regional planning, employment, housing, noise, amenity, defence, land use and air traffic control. They also outlined the need for a cost/benefit analysis as the basis of a comparison between alternative sites.³ The

1. Their witnesses included Mr. Brancker and Professor Peter Hall, while they were again represented by Mr. Peter Boydell, Q.C. Herts and Essex Observer, 10 January, 1969. Because the Roskill Commission did not short-list Stansted, there was no local inquiry. After the publication of the short-list, NWEEHPA undertook no further activity with regard to the Roskill Commission.

2. Commission on the Third London Airport, Papers and Proceedings Volume 2. London: HMSO, 1969, p. 97.

3. Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, Commission on the Third London Airport Submission No. 2; Statement on Proposed Sites. October 1968.

local Councils for the most part accepted the offer of the County Councils for them to be associated with the County Councils' submissions.¹ The tactics of most of these councils were to concentrate their efforts upon presenting their specific objections at the local inquiry stage if that was necessary.²

1. These Councils included Saffron Walden BC, Bishop's Stortford UDC, Epping UDC, Harlow UDC, Hoddesdon UDC, Sawbridgeworth UDC, Braughing RDC, Epping and Ongar RDC, Saffron Walden RDC, and Ware RDC.

2. For instance, Dunmow RDC. Interview (Mr. A.J. Little).

CHAPTER NINE

THE STANSTED CONTROVERSY : SUCCESS/FAIL FACTORS

Perhaps the most interesting and significant point that arises out of the Stansted Controversy is the fact that the local pressure groups succeeded in preventing the development of Stansted into the Third London Airport. Their achievement is all the more significant when it is realized that in order to do this, they had in effect to force the Government to reverse a decision which had been taken by the Cabinet and to which the Government was fully committed.

It is not every day that Cabinet decisions are reversed and especially by local pressure groups such as those which have been the subject of this study. It is also a rare occurrence that a Government decision on a highly complex technical issue of this nature is reversed except by those directly involved in decision-making on the particular issue. Essentially the local pressure groups succeeded because they had a strong case which was effectively marshalled and presented by them as part of their pressure group action. On the other hand the Government had a weak case that was ineptly supported and presented. In this chapter, the factors which contributed to this success of the local pressure groups will be examined.

An important underlying factor was the basic nature of pressure group action in this controversy. For the Stansted Controversy in-

involved a regional and rural protest against an impending central government decision. An essential ingredient upon which pressure group activity was built was the strong local opposition that developed to the airport proposals in the rural area immediately around Stansted and in the surrounding region. This regional and rural protest element emerged because the development of the airport and central government decision-making in this case were seen by local people as a threat to the continuance of their way of life and to the existence of the local community with which they identified themselves. In undertaking pressure group action, the local pressure groups were able to build upon this widespread local unrest. NWEEHPA used this reservoir of local discontent to provide the backbone of the NWEEHPA organization. Without this widespread local opposition, the local pressure groups, particularly NWEEHPA, would not have had the local support which they needed. Without it, NWEEHPA for instance, would not have been able to raise the financial resources that it needed. This widespread local discontent strengthened the hands of the local pressure groups in undertaking pressure group action because they were able to speak on behalf of a large number of local people, and because they appeared to be based upon a cross section of the local community and not on a particular group of 'interested' individuals. Obviously local pressure groups need local support and the greater this base of support, the greater the chance that an effective pressure group will be created. In this way,

the widespread local discontent over this issue made possible the creation of an effective protest pressure group.

It is not sufficient for a protest pressure group to have this base of support in order to establish itself. NWEHPA became an effective protest pressure group because it was able to mobilize local people and to carry out pressure group activity on their behalf. It was able to do so easily because its local village, town and parish groups became an integral part of the local community. In mobilizing local people, it was aided by the close knit nature of this community. The lower tier of NWEHPA's organization followed the natural boundaries of the component parts of this local community. Through these groups the local people became part of the overall fight against the airport. At the same time the upper tier of the NWEHPA's organization gave the leaders the channel through which to give central direction to the organization. In a similar way the organizational structure of the councils enabled their leaders to give central direction to their group's efforts. But the ability of these local pressure groups to take action was enhanced by the fact that they were able to take quick decisions. This ability was important as it enabled them to create a momentum behind the political campaign against the Government decision with a minimum of delay. It also enabled them to change their strategy and tactics to meet changing needs as decision-making proceeded in this case.

The nature and quality of the leadership of the local pressure groups also contributed to their success. Their leadership was drawn from a broad cross section of the local community including many of its leaders. The fact that many of the leaders of the local community joined the fight against the airport encouraged many other local people to support the local pressure groups. In this way the leadership of the local pressure groups contributed to the mobilization of the local community. Many of their leaders, who were commuters working in London, had by virtue of their occupations experience and contacts which were valuable for pressure group action, and which were, for instance, of help to them in the preparation and presentation of their cases. The leadership also was able to identify what needed to be done in order to prevent the development of Stansted. Throughout the controversy an important basis of pressure group action by the local pressure groups was the clear view that their leaders had in strategic and tactical terms of the situation that faced them. The leadership showed itself to be politically sophisticated in the manner in which it identified the targets and channels of influence and in the way it selected the appropriate strategy and tactics. The quality of leadership shown was important to their success because it resulted in the deployment of their resources in such a way as to gain the maximum return in terms of achieving their objective. For instance, this can be seen in the heavy emphasis that was placed upon the use of the technical and

legal experts in the preparation and presentation of their case throughout the controversy.

In fact, their use of technical and legal experts was a vital factor in their success. The use of these experts enabled the local pressure groups to assemble a strong case against the Stansted site which was based on national and local grounds. In comparison with the Government case, that of the local pressure groups was well prepared and researched. In the course of their preparations, they had considered a wide range of issues which were related to the question of the location of the new airport for London. Much of the strength of their case stemmed from the fact that they took neither a narrow local view of the question nor one solely based upon aviation considerations. Issues such as those of planning and amenity received considerable attention. The result was that they were able to formulate cases against Stansted based upon many wide ranging grounds. This enabled them to present arguments and amass much evidence that showed Stansted to be an unsuitable site.

Their position was further strengthened by the inherent weakness of the case of the Ministry of Aviation and the Government, whose arguments for Stansted were based almost entirely upon aviation considerations. These arguments which were put forward at different stages of the controversy were inconsistent and served to undermine the credibility of the Government case for Stansted. This weakness in the Government position stemmed from the in-

adequate consideration that was given to the question of the provision of a new airport for London by the Government Departments and officials concerned. In the little consideration given to the question, there was an overwhelming emphasis upon the aviation aspects of the question to the neglect of issues such as regional planning, town and country planning and amenity. Perhaps the real weakness of the Government position was that the machinery by which they hoped to formulate the decision was defective. The procedure adopted inside the Government was inadequate for ascertaining all relevant information on the question. The Inter-Departmental Committee, which was overwhelmingly composed of representatives of aviation interests and which was tied closely to the Ministry of Aviation, was an unsuitable forum for the initial consideration of an issue as complex as the location of the new airport. As could have been predicted, issues of amenity, regional planning, town and country planning and noise, which are vital aspects of any decision involving the siting of an international airport, were given scant attention by this Committee. As decision-making proceeded in this case a momentum behind the choice of Stansted was created inside the governmental administrative machine because individuals became committed to defending Stansted as the Ministry's choice for the Third London Airport rather than assessing the strengths and weakness of all the evidence that was produced.

Added to this was the seeming unwillingness or incapacity of Ministers to control these officials rather than being controlled by them. The lack of decisive political leadership on this issue was the result of the large number of changes that occurred in the political personnel and in the Governmental administrative institutions responsible for aviation and airports' policy. These made Ministers dependent upon their officials, and this was particularly so when aviation and airports' policy was the responsibility of the Board of Trade, which was concerned with many problems besides aviation and airports. But on the other hand, there was not until the summer of 1967 any real reason for the Government to suppose that the issue would become a major political controversy in which public opinion would be aroused. Before the decision, opposition had been restricted to the locality and the local pressure groups had not shown how really intense the local feeling against the airport was. They had stuck to presenting technical arguments during the public inquiry. The Government miscalculated the strength and feeling of the local opposition, and also the strength of national public feeling on this issue. The result of this failure of political leadership was that the initial inadequacies of decision-making on this issue were reinforced by the determination of officials concerned with aviation to defend their faulty decision regardless of the contrary arguments which were advanced by the local pressure groups and others.

The weakness of the Government position was increased by its inept handling of the issue and by the inconsistent presentation of its case for Stansted. This enabled the local pressure groups slowly to work the Government into an untenable political position where it had to give way to the demands of the local pressure groups for a new inquiry. This process began with the weak case that the Ministry presented at the public inquiry. The Ministry, through its arguments and evidence, failed to sustain its case for Stansted, with the consequence that the public inquiry Inspector was unable to recommend Stansted and suggested that a new investigation be held before steps were taken to develop the site. In its handling of the results of the inquiry and in the way in which it reached the decision, the Government played into the hands of the local pressure groups by giving them strong grounds for opposing the Government decision and for appealing for public support. As the inquiry was not a statutory public inquiry, there were no legal grounds why the Government should have accepted the Inspector's Report and followed his recommendations. His function was only to advise it of the local objections to the choice of Stansted. But politically, given the past assurances that it had given to the local pressure groups, it would have been wiser not to disregard them as the Government did by holding its secret review. In this way the Government gave the local pressure groups good grounds to charge the Government with breaking its promises and assurances. This enabled the local pressure groups

to undermine the credibility of the Government and its case for Stansted. As a result the Government appeared to be pushing the choice of Stansted regardless of the arguments against it and in favour of alternative sites. This again served to undermine the credibility of the Government position. The Government's position was further undermined by the inconsistencies that appeared in its arguments for Stansted. The manner in which the Government intended to proceed with the plan for realigning the runways in the Stansted proposals without a further public inquiry only increased scepticism about the Government's choice of Stansted.

The credibility of the Government's and BAA's case for Stansted was further undermined by the activities of other national groups during the post decision phase of the controversy. The Stansted decision and proposals received almost universal condemnation from national groups concerned with such problems as regional and town and country planning, noise, agriculture, and amenity. Individually and cumulatively these groups showed that there was a considerable body of expert and specialist opinion that was opposed to the development of Stansted. In addition some groups of consultants produced detailed reports and schemes for the development of other sites, which the Government had argued were not suitable sites, thereby raising further doubts and questions about the arguments presented by the Government. These public expressions of doubts from many eminent groups and individuals as well gave the Government bad

publicity and helped the local pressure groups in their efforts to convince MPs and Peers that a new inquiry was needed, and that the Special Development Order should be opposed. In these efforts, the local pressure groups were able to demonstrate that there was a substantial element of public opinion, including the national press, that was opposed to the Stansted decision. The large number of letters that local people and others sent MPs and Peers were an important index of public view on the issue. The opinions expressed by these groups and by individual members of the public were an important element contributing to the success of the local pressure groups because it showed decision-makers and others, whom the local pressure groups were seeking to influence, that public opinion was against the Government. The Government was left in an exposed position, and one in which it could gain favourable publicity only by granting the local pressure groups the new inquiry. The local pressure groups placed the Government in a position where it had to decide if it was worth proceeding with Stansted. They showed the Government that there would be a considerable political cost involved in terms of continued unfavourable publicity.

If continued unfavourable publicity for some time had been the only political cost involved for the Government in continuing Stansted, then the local pressure groups would probably have not been able to push home their advantages. The local pressure groups succeeded in gaining the new inquiry because they were able to force

the Government into a situation where it faced defeat and humiliation in, at least, the House of Lords. In fact, through the constant work of their Parliamentary leaders, they had been able to create in both Houses a situation where the Government was being squeezed between a rebel lobby inside its own party and the opposition. In fact, what was created in both Houses was the situation which *Finer* suggests is that which makes for a successful pressure group,¹ namely (Opposition + Ministerial Lobby) vs. Ministerialists = SUCCESS.

As is most often the case, this situation was being played out behind the scenes rather than on the floor of either House. It did surface from time to time, such as through the EDM organized by Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens. Their success at the Parliamentary level would not have been possible without the close co-operation that existed between Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens. In many ways the part of Mr. Newens was more crucial because he was successful in organizing opposition on the Government back benches. This was possible because the issue did not become an issue of party politics. As a result Mr. Kirk and Mr. Newens were able to operate as two locally concerned MPs who were members of different parties. Crucial therefore was the fact that they were able to make their efforts at the Parliamentary level bipartisan. This meant that the Government was under attack from both sides of the House. Even though the Special Development Order might be forced through the Commons by using the 'whip', it would have a rough passage through the House.

1. *Finer, op. cit.*, p. 75.

This would have gained the Government further bad publicity.

Much more crucial was the situation in the Lords because in that House the local pressure groups were able through their bipartisan campaign to gain considerable support on both sides of the House. Indeed, they created a situation where it seemed most likely that the Government would be defeated by a combination of Peers, that included support on all sides of the House, who were opposed to Stansted. Defeat in the Lords would have put the Government in an impossible position because it would have had to find another means of gaining approval for its decision, all of which would have meant some delay and continued unfavourable publicity before the issue would have finally disappeared. But defeat would also have been humiliating especially after their long and determined stand in defence of the decision. By confronting the Government with the probability of defeat in the Lords, together with the prospect of further unfavourable publicity the local pressure groups were able to put the Government in an untenable position where the political cost of proceeding with its decision would have been high. Given this situation, the Government finally decided to have a new inquiry. The final success, through the Roskill Commission, was the result of their being able to present a strong technical case against Stansted.

Success for the local pressure groups in this case therefore was the result of their being well organized with a strong case which had public support from specialized as well as mass public opinion

and their being able to gain the tacit support of the Opposition and the support of a Ministerial Lobby in both Houses of Parliament during the political battle. Crucial also was their ability to present strong and well argued technical cases to the public inquiries. In the political battle which is integral to their final success they succeeded because they were able to create a situation which makes for successful pressure group actions, namely:

(Specialized and Mass Public Opinion + Opposition + Ministerial Lobby)
vs. Ministerialists = SUCCESS.

PART THREE :
THE CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

This study of the Stansted Airport Controversy points to the need for some re-assessment, along the lines suggested in Chapter One, of the picture of British pressure groups that has emerged from the literature. This re-assessment would involve recognizing that pressure groups other than interest groups at times play a significant role in the British political process, and that there are differences in the behaviour pattern of the different types of pressure groups. This study points to some of the differences between protest pressure groups, public authority pressure groups and interest groups. This re-assessment would also involve recognizing that there are these different types of pressure groups operating at different levels in the British political system. This study has been concerned with local/national pressure groups which were locally based pressure groups that sought to achieve their goals at the national level because of the nature of decision-making authority on questions of airports' policy. In this case the locality articulated its demands concerning the development of Stansted Airport through a group of locally based pressure groups which acted to influence the national decision-making process. In effect this means recognizing that interest articulation in Britain will not just come through nationally based pressure groups

but will also be expressed through locally based pressure groups even on matters within the jurisdiction of the central government.

The pressure group activity which has been the subject of this study differs from the usual pattern of British pressure group activity. The most usual pattern of behaviour is that of national interest groups which are the most important and influential of British pressure groups. Their behaviour, as was shown in Chapter One, is based upon seeking their goals through maintaining a close relationship involving consultation and negotiation with particular government departments. They are reluctant to use other channels of influence that might disturb this relationship. This pressure group activity is based upon a large measure of agreement between the Ministry and the interest group concerned on the framework and the essential details of policy. It is also based upon the desire on the part of both parties to work together in pursuit of agreed policy ends and also upon some degree of common interest between them.

In the Stansted Airport Controversy pressure group activity differed from this pattern because the aforementioned elements which enable interest groups to behave in this manner were missing. The essential element of pressure group activity in this case was protest, and protest based upon a fundamental conflict of interests and objectives between the local pressure groups which became the representatives of their region and the Government and the Ministry of Aviation (later the Board of Trade). The local pressure groups did not want

the airport at Stansted, while the Government and the Ministry were determined that it should be developed at Stansted. Pressure group activity in essence revolved around these contradictory positions. Once the two sides had developed their respective positions, there was little ground for compromise. Either the airport would be developed at Stansted with all the profound implications that would follow from the development of major international area in a rural area, or the airport would not be developed at Stansted. Given the size and nature of the proposed development there was little real chance that any way could be found to make the development palatable to the local pressure groups, as, for example, could have been done with a motorway route. There was also no room for compromise because both sides were determined to hold to their positions. Therefore the essential elements which would make for a close relationship with a government department were missing because both parties had different aims and interests. Instead a conflict relationship between the local pressure groups and the Government developed as both sides moved to defend their interests and position.

In this type of conflict situation pressure group activity and the behaviour of the pressure groups involved will be determined by the nature of the decision-making process as it develops and by the actions and decisions of the particular decision-maker because pressure group activity involving protest is a response to an impending or actual decision. This type of pressure group activity differs from

other types of pressure group activity in which interest or norm-oriented pressure groups are involved because in these latter cases the initiative for pressing their demands is not a response to a particular decision but the result of the intentions of the pressure group itself to seek certain goals. In fact, they choose when and how to put their demands to the decision-makers. Of course their behaviour will be affected by the response those demands meet, but their behaviour will not be as closely determined by the actions of the decision-making process as is the behaviour of those involved in protest pressure group action. Pressure groups involved in protest pressure group action against a particular Government decision will have to use the channels of influence in response to the decision-making process as it is operating at the particular point in time if they are to have any chance of achieving their objectives.¹

For instance, in the Stansted Airport Controversy, the local pressure groups were limited in the ways in which they could hope to achieve their objective of preventing the development of Stansted. In the initial phase of the controversy, they had to concentrate upon influencing the public inquiry. If the local pressure groups were able

1. Other groups, which may be value-oriented attitude pressure groups, may protest against policies or values being pursued by public authorities or in the society without protesting particular decisions. These groups will not be limited to particular channels of influence because their activities are not closely tied to the decision-making. In fact, they may not use the established channels of influence to pursue their objectives. See pp. 16-17 above.

to convince the public inquiry that Stansted was an unsuitable site, they would have been able to point to the fact that their case against the development of Stansted had been supported by a public inquiry which had heard all the arguments. On the other hand, if they had failed to convince the public inquiry that Stansted was an unsuitable site, they would have been in a weak position to oppose the decision to develop Stansted. The Government would then have been able to win public support because it would have been able to argue that it had held a public inquiry and that its case for Stansted had been upheld by that inquiry. The political campaign against the Government decision for Stansted was a response to the actions of the Government which was then proceeding to gain the necessary Parliamentary authority to allow it to implement its decision. The situation was then one of political combat. If the local pressure groups wanted to prevent the development of Stansted, they could no longer influence the Executive except by putting pressure upon it through the use of other channels of influence such as Parliament and public opinion. The behaviour of the local pressure groups again was determined in the final phases of the controversy by their need to present a technical case to the Roskill Commission.

The use of the channels of influence by protest pressure groups will be similar to that of other pressure groups but the reasons for using and the emphasis given to the use of particular channels will not be the same because of the difference in the nature of protest

pressure group activity. Some protest pressure groups may seek to achieve their objectives through establishing close contact with the Administration, and they may be prepared to compromise with the decision-maker to achieve the essence of their demands. For instance, a motorway route may be found which will suit both sides to a dispute. Whether this type of bargaining will take place will depend on the nature of the subject of the protest and the positions of protest pressure groups and the Government. But protest pressure groups, unlike interest groups, will be prepared to use other channels of influence such as Parliament or public opinion to put pressure upon the Administration or the Executive if they are unable to achieve their objectives through establishing contact with the Administration. The use of these other channels by protest pressure groups will not be confined to what Stewart termed the 'politics of issues'.¹ They will be prepared to use these other channels on matters of detail within the general policy framework that had been set in their area of concern. The question of Stansted and its development would fall into the category of detail within the framework of airports' policy, but in this case NWEHPA was prepared to use Parliament and public opinion as channels of influence. In this case because of the fundamental and irreconcilable divergence of interests and objectives there was no bargaining through contacts between the local pressure groups and the Ministry.

1. Stewart, op. cit., p. 29.

Pressure group activity in this controversy differed from the pattern of behaviour of interest groups in other ways as well. Interest groups' leaders work in a close relationship with their opposite numbers inside the Ministry behind the scenes. This relationship is one that works more effectively when there is an absence of public interest and publicity on the matters of concern to the interest group involved. Indeed interest group leaders will positively shy away from publicity because this could upset their relationship with the Administration. But the success of protest pressure groups and other pressure groups involved in protest pressure group activity will depend upon their ability to stimulate public interest in the issue so that either mass or specialized public opinion can be brought to bear upon the decision-makers. Hostile public opinion provided a major factor in the success of the local pressure groups in this controversy because it enabled them to enlist the support of MPs and Peers to put pressure upon the Government and because it made the Government aware that the cost of proceeding with its decision was too high. Without the considerable public interest aroused in the issue of Stansted both at the local and the national level, the local pressure groups would not have been able to mobilize the support which they needed if they were to have any chance of preventing the development of Stansted.

In addition, pressure groups in conflict with the Government will seek to use a bipartisan approach to the issue when using Parliament as a channel of influence. In this way they can increase their

freedom to manoeuvre and put pressure on the Government because they have support on both sides of the House. This will also encourage other sympathetic MPs to support the pressure group because they are not faced with a choice between supporting the pressure group or their party. When the issue becomes a party political issue, MPs will support their own party, and will thus limit the ability of the pressure group to put pressure upon the Government. Preventing the issue from becoming one of party politics is of particular importance in the case when pressure group action and demands are based upon one region or locality where the pressure groups need support in Parliament from all the local MPs irrespective of their party allegiance. In the Stansted case, the absence of party conflict on the issue enabled the local MPs to work together to fight the development of the airport and to act as parliamentary leaders of the local protest. If the issue had been a party issue Mr. Newens would have been in an exposed political position because he would have appeared to be fighting his own Government, and this would also have made it difficult for him to gain support on the Government backbenches.

The local Councils acted as pressure groups in this case because the normal channels of communication with the Administration had broken down. There was a conflict of interests and objectives between them and the Administration. The behavior of the public authorities as pressure groups is similar to that of interest groups in that they will maintain their close relationship with Government Departments or the Execu-

tive until the time that they consider that their interests are directly threatened and the channels of communication with the Government have broken down. Like interest groups, they will be reluctant to undertake pressure group action against the Government that involves the use of other channels of influence such as Parliament or public opinion. When they do undertake pressure group action, they will use the channels of influence in a manner which will ensure that there is no conflict between their taking pressure group action and their responsibilities as public authorities. In this controversy the Councils sought to avoid partisan involvement in the local debate on the question. Rather they tried to represent the local interest at the national level by acting as a representative of the local community as a whole.

Two other points relating to behaviour of the local pressure groups remain to be noted. First, this study confirms Eckstein's hypothesis that pressure groups in their political action will focus their activity upon the basis of actual political and decision-making power and not upon the supposed constitutionally appointed bodies.¹ In the case of the British Medical Association there was a direct relationship between the interest group and the Ministry. In the Stansted case, the prime target of influence throughout the controversy was the Executive (the Cabinet), who were the actual decision-makers. But the means used to influence and pressure them were indirect because of the nature of pressure group action and the differences in interests and objectives

1. Eckstein, op. cit., p. 16.

of both parties to the controversy. Nonetheless, although this was a conflict situation which did not involve direct contacts between the local pressure groups and the Government, pressure group action was focused upon influencing the actual decision-makers. Their strategy and tactics were based upon a clear understanding of the nature of decision-making power in this case.

On the other hand, this study does not confirm Eckstein's hypothesis that pressure group structure will follow that of the governmental structure.¹ The public authority pressure groups retained the structure which they had established for the purpose of acting as local government units. The structure of NWEHPA as a protest pressure group was designed to mobilize people at the grass roots level and to give central direction to the organization in undertaking protest pressure group activity on behalf of the local people. In other words the structure of NWEHPA was designed to enable it to carry out protest pressure group activity. The structure of a pressure group will follow that of the governmental structure when the pressure group has close and continuous relations with a particular Ministry.

In this controversy, local/national pressure groups had a significant impact upon the national decision-making process. These local pressure groups articulated their local demands in the national decision-making process. They based themselves upon their locality and region and made themselves the representative and spokesmen of the region in respect of this issue. They acted at the national level on the basis of

1. Ibid., p. 21.

this support. But in acting on behalf of this local interest at the national level, they put their case and their demands in terms of the national interest rather than the local interest. In the case of Stansted these two interests could be seen as overlapping because of the need in Britain to preserve as much rural countryside as possible, especially in the 'green belt' areas around the large conurbations. Local/national pressure groups will seek in undertaking pressure group action at the national level to become the representative and spokesman of the local interest in relation to a particular issue of concern. But they will articulate these demands whenever possible in terms of the national interest.

A significant feature of the controversy was the way in which decision-making was undertaken throughout. In fact, the nature and quality of decision-making in relation to the issue gives rise to considerable concern and raises questions about the ability of the Government to make decisions on technical issues such as this one. The decision-making process was revealed as inadequate for the making of a decision as complex and as technical as that of siting an international airport. The development of an international airport, as the experience of Heathrow should have shown decision-makers, has profound effects upon the area concerned because it is a generator of widespread development in the surrounding areas. It will have important implications for many areas of public policy and concern such as regional economic planning, town and country planning, employment, population distribution,

surface transport, agriculture, amenity and the quality of life in the particular locality. Therefore it might be expected that before any decision is made to locate an international airport on a particular site, all these considerations would be taken into account and weighed against each other. Several possible sites ought to be assessed and compared so that the most suitable site would be chosen. It might also be expected that the question of a new airport for London would be the subject of careful consideration and planning inside the government and that many of the interested and concerned groups inside and outside the government would be consulted or involved in the decision-making process, especially as it is a usual practice in Britain to consult with interested groups. In addition, it might be expected that interested and concerned Government Departments would be involved in decision-making and that there would be some attempt to fit this decision into the framework of the other policies pursued by Government Departments.

The major problem with decision-making in this case was that it took place within very narrow parameters. In addition, decision-making inside the Government was dominated throughout by individuals and groups who were involved in aviation. The issue was raised in the first place in the context of aviation needs, namely that of a new airport for London, and those initially concerned with making decisions on the question set about trying to solve this problem entirely in isolation and within the confines of aviation considerations. This can be seen most clearly with the Inter-Departmental Committee, which had

been appointed by the Minister of Aviation, and which was dominated by aviation interests to the almost complete exclusion of other interests inside and outside the government. Their report seemed an attempt to justify the already determined choice of Stansted rather than a genuine attempt to consider all the issues and set out the most suitable site for the airport. They had visited only Stansted and made no real effort to consult other departments or to take their policies into consideration in arriving at the choice of Stansted. Indeed had they consulted with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the local authorities, they would have found that their view that the Stansted area was suitable for large scale development was in flat contradiction to the already approved policies being pursued by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the local authorities in Essex and Hertfordshire.

The initial position which was arrived at through this process was based upon inadequate consideration of the questions and implications involved. Groups and individuals which were not involved with aviation had not been consulted and there had not been any effort at undertaking full-scale research and investigation involving such techniques as cost/benefit analysis and costing of alternative sites. In fact, those advising the Minister of Aviation and recommending the choice of Stansted did not have at their command enough evidence and information on which to recommend Stansted. But nonetheless they became committed to the choice of Stansted and continued to defend their choice throughout decision-making on this issue in spite of the

fact that their case for Stansted had been proved to be inadequate. A momentum behind the choice of Stansted was created inside the Governmental administrative machine as these and other officials concerned with aviation became committed to defending the choice of Stansted against other groups and individuals. The essential problem with decision-making was that a small group of those concerned with aviation were allowed to dominate the decision-making process because they were the so-called experts in this issue.

The failure of decision-making was not purely a failure of the officials concerned to undertake a thorough study of the subject. It was rather a failure of political leadership. Ministers allowed themselves to be controlled by their officials rather than exerting a guiding hand over the course of decision-making. They failed to control the work of their officials and did not give clear directions on the way in which decision-making should be undertaken. This failure was perhaps most serious in the case of Mr. Julian Amery who seemed content in the initial stages to accept that there was a need for a new airport and that Stansted should be developed as that airport. He restricted himself purely to accepting the arguments of aviation needs, whereas as a Minister, who is a politician, he should have been concerned with more than the aviation aspects of the question. It should be the Minister's responsibility to ensure that all the aspects of the question, including those outside the immediate concern of his department were considered. Many of the problems which arose during the

controversy stemmed from the failure of Mr. Amery and other Ministers responsible for Aviation to assert overall needs, including those of planning, etc., upon their officials who were concerned with aviation. The failure was also one of co-ordination of different departments by the politicians. Mr. Amery is not the only Minister who was responsible for this failure, because his Labour successors, who supposedly were committed to planning and efficiency in government, should have realized that the basis for the decision was inadequate and that there was a need for them to assert some control over the course of decision-making on this issue. Instead the Labour Ministers, in spite of their commitments to planning and control of the civil servants, allowed these officials to proceed upon a course that would lead to the development of Stansted.

This is an old problem with government in Britain and indeed in many other countries. The failure of political leadership was the result of many reasons. The constant changes of political personnel responsible for aviation and the structure of decision-making authority with regard to aviation gave officials concerned with aviation considerable advantages over Ministers. Ministers were never in their job long enough to assert control over the Ministry of Aviation. Later when the Board of Trade was responsible for aviation, the Minister had too many responsibilities to have the time to devote to this issue until it became a major political controversy. The problem is not purely a failure of political leadership but also one of relations between

political leaders and officials within Governmental administrative organizations. In these relations political leaders, because they hold office for relatively short periods compared with their officials, are at a disadvantage because they are not as familiar with the details of the issues and problems which fall within the purview of their departments.

In the past political scientists and politicians have been concerned with what they considered to be the undue influence of certain pressure groups and interests over decision-making. These concerns raised questions about whether pressure groups contributed to or distorted the democratic process. In this case, in so far as it enabled the local people to express and put their views on the question of Stansted to the decision-makers, pressure group activity contributed to rather than distorted the democratic process. This presupposes that one aspect of democracy is that the people should have some say either directly or indirectly through their elected representatives in decisions that directly affect their lives and that decision-makers should be responsive to the views and claims of the people. Without the pressure group activity undertaken by the local pressure groups throughout this controversy, a decision would have been taken and implemented without any real consideration being given to the views and concerns of those people directly affected by the location of the airport at Stansted. It was only through the local pressure groups that the local people were able to make their voice heard and it was

only after continued and sustained pressure that the Government became responsive to their claims.

This case shows that pressure groups and particularly protest pressure groups provide a means through which people affected by Government decisions can put their views directly to the decision-makers. This is especially important in a case such as the Stansted one where decisions, because of their complex technical nature, are in effect made by a small group of officials who are not directly responsible to Parliament as Ministers are. Protest pressure group activity such as that undertaken in this case provided a means whereby the Executive and the Administration could be controlled and made to account for their decisions. But what is disturbing about this case is that that control could only be exerted after a sustained effort which needed considerable financial resources, and which few other groups or areas of the country could have been able to marshal. The decision-making structure on planning questions such as this one has to be re-organized so that groups of individuals who are affected by decisions can more easily put their views on decisions which will affect their lives considerably. The Roskill Commission and the new planning inquiry mechanism is a step in the right direction. But what is needed is recognition by officials and Ministers that affected people should be consulted and allowed to present their views at a stage when proposals are still being formulated. This practice after all would not be new to British politics because rather than being presented with what is

virtually a 'fait accompli,' interest groups and other pressure groups are often involved in the formulation of policy and decisions even though the ultimate responsibility may rest with the Minister and his department. What is needed therefore is the extension of principles underlying functional representation in other areas involving interest groups to involve as far as possible planning decisions. The early involvement of the people and the local authorities in this case might have avoided a major controversy as it would have become clear right from the start that Stansted was unsuitable. This would have enabled Ministers with support to have exerted more control over their officials. These reforms are all the more urgent because if it continues to be difficult for people to protest against Government decisions, they will look to extra-constitutional means to express their opposition to the Government.

A number of other points, which were not of direct concern to us in this study, arise and raise questions which would merit further research. In recent years a view has grown up that local government units were weak and subservient to the central government. The activity of the Councils in this controversy would suggest that local government units are stronger and less subservient to the central government than has been supposed. When their vital interests were directly threatened these Councils stood their ground and fought the central government over this issue. The relations between central and local government in regard to particular issues such as planning

questions provide an area for further research. A study of the Stansted Controversy also suggests that a feeling of regional identity in the form of an attachment to the particular locality or area of the country may well be an important factor in the political culture of England as well as of Scotland and Wales, where attachment to the locality and area of the country has been one of the factors that has contributed to the growth of the nationalist parties committed to Scottish and Welsh independence. Certainly a distrust of the central government and its officials was present among local people during the course of this controversy. It would be interesting to know whether this was related to this particular issue only or is a more general feeling among the local people in this area.

A number of important political issues, which ought to have been of concern to political decision-makers, were raised either explicitly or implicitly during the course of this controversy. Perhaps most important is the need to decide a balance between the needs of people who use transport facilities such as air transport and those people who are affected by these facilities because they live near installations such as airports. What was disturbing about decision-making in this case was the failure of those responsible for the decision to balance the needs of people who would be affected by the location of an airport in their area against those of another group of people who use air transport facilities. In a small island such as ours where there is only limited space available both for airports

and residential areas it is of vital importance that this balance be considered very carefully before decisions are made.

Also disturbing is the uncritical acceptance by the politicians of the arguments and demands of the 'experts' concerned with aviation for a new airport and the failure of the politicians to weigh other needs against that for the airport. If we are to preserve a tolerable human existence in this country, then there will have to be greater awareness of and concern for the need to preserve the environment. For instance, there is a need to protect people from excessive noise and to preserve the countryside, especially when it has the qualities that the area around Stansted has. Given the smallness of our country there is an urgent need, which has been demonstrated yet again in this controversy, to plan development and land use in a systematic manner so that all our land resources are used to maximum benefit. This means that airports are not built in areas of high quality agricultural land and recreational areas when other alternatives could be used even at a higher financial cost. Political decision-makers, who are ultimately responsible for deciding priorities, must be concerned with ensuring that there is thorough research, investigation and planning behind decisions, such as the Stansted one, which involve considerable land use. Under the Town and Country Planning Acts there is a system which controls land use throughout the country. The disturbing thing is, as the Stansted Controversy showed, that it is ineffective because Government Departments do not consult each other when land

use is involved. One can only hope that when decisions are made in the future on the Third London Airport and on other development projects, greater attention will be paid to the needs of the people who live in the areas concerned and to proper land use for the entire nation.

The framework which was used for this study, by combining the 'group' and the 'issue or decision-making' approaches to the study of pressure groups, provided a useful means through which to bring together the different aspects of the controversy which were relevant to explaining the behaviour and success of the local pressure groups. The framework was a device for bringing these different aspects together but did not of itself explain the behaviour patterns or the success of the local pressure groups. The value of the framework is that it helps one to see the different aspects of the controversy which are relevant to the particular analysis. With this framework it was possible to centre the study upon the local pressure groups, which were the subject of the study, but yet at the same time to bring in the actions and activities of other actors such as the Government which had, in this case, an important bearing upon the behaviour and success of the local pressure groups. In fact, it would have been impossible to understand the behaviour and success of the local pressure groups without reference to their environment. This aspect is of particular importance where protest pressure group action is the subject of the study because the behaviour and success or failure of a protest pressure group will

be directly affected, if not determined, by their environment.

Finally, a number of hypotheses requiring further investigation suggest themselves as a result of this study:

- 1) All pressure groups in their political action will focus their activity upon the basis of actual political and decision-making power and not upon the supposed constitutionally appointed bodies.
- 2) National groups have the national interest in mind and work within the framework of the national interest but local/national pressure groups do not act with the national interest in mind but with their conception of the local interest.
- 3) A pressure group in pursuing its aims will seek to ensure that the issue will not become a party political issue and will seek to promote a bipartisan approach to their demands.
- 4) In planning or politically non-controversial issues (of a technical nature) pressure groups will seek to bargain directly with the Government decision-making body concerned.
- 5) In politically controversial issues there is a process of tacit bargaining between the pressure group and the government decision-making body concerned and both sides will focus upon a point which gives the group in effect what they are seeking but allows the Government to save as much face as possible.
- 6) The influence of pressure groups is enhanced by the lack of any wide public interest and publicity in the area of policy that interests the pressure group.

- 7) The organization of the pressure group structure will follow that of the governmental structure.
- 8) The nature of pressure group activity involving protest against a decision or an impending decision will be determined by the nature of the decision-making process concerned and the actions and decisions of the particular decision-maker concerned.
- 9) Protest pressure groups will concentrate their attention upon influencing those who will ultimately make the final decision on the subject of concern to them rather than upon those who are concerned with the early stages of decision-making.
- 10) The decision-making process will determine the channels of influence that will be used by the protest pressure group and will determine the tactics adopted.
- 11) Protest pressure groups involved in planning decisions will aim for a hearing at a public inquiry and will accept the result of that inquiry.
- 12) Local/national protest pressure groups will seek to become the representative of their locality or region in its dealings with the central government decision-makers.
- 13) Public authorities become pressure groups when their policies and needs cannot be gained through the usual administrative structures that are open to it as a public authority.

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2. SOURCES FOR THE CASE STUDY

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ii) Interviews:

Mrs. S. Forsyth, General Organizer for NWEEHPA 1967-69.
Mr. Peter Kirk, MP for Saffron Walden.

Mr. A.J. Little, Clerk to Dunmow RDC.

Mr. John Lukies, Joint Chairman of NWEEHPA and Dunmow RDC
Councillor.

Mr. J.S. Mills, Deputy Clerk, Essex County Council.

Mr. Stan Newens, then MP for Epping.