

Duty on Automobiles

are a necessity for a great many of our people, particularly doctors, preachers, commercial travellers and farmers. It has been estimated that farmers in western Canada, or in Alberta, live on an average ten miles from a railway, and yet only about one-third of them own motor cars. While on a visit to British Columbia last year I noticed that practically all the fruit which was being delivered to packing houses in one of the large fruit centres of British Columbia was being delivered in motor trucks. I did not see one rig drawn by horses. These men have to pay practically 50 per cent more for their motor trucks than their competitors to the south of the boundary. In one town in my constituency this fall there were fifty-seven men delivering wheat to the elevator with motor trucks. Some of them were hauling the wheat a distance of twenty-eight miles. There are many others still hauling wheat with horses. I wish hon. members in this House could realize what a boon it would be to these farmers if they could afford to own motor trucks and deliver their wheat with them. It is impossible for a railway company to build railways within ten miles of all our settlers, and any man who has to haul his wheat, his cream and all his produce more than ten miles to market is certainly badly in need of a motor truck. For these and other reasons which I shall enumerate I think it is the duty of the House, without further delay, to see that some reduction is made in the price of motor trucks, so far at least as this can be attained through a reduction of the tariff. Henry Ford was quoted last year in the Ford Times as saying:

The great trouble with farming is that it involves too much unnecessary work. There is no reason why agriculture may not hope to come abreast of the other industries in the near future, if the farmer will turn his attention to modern industrial methods, instead of to the problem of borrowing money. There is no food scarcity. The problem is not one of how to increase production, and thereby pile up a surplus for speculators to play with, but how to simplify production and distribution so that less human energy shall be wasted in the process.

One of the ways to solve this farm problem is to reduce the price of motor trucks. I have never yet heard any suggestion in this House as to how it could be done unless we reduce the tariff. The low-priced automobile and the motor truck is the greatest boon which has come to farmers since labour-saving machinery was invented. Again I would quote from the Ford Times:

*Autos Reduce The Farm Migration
Easy to Get to Town Now; Just a Case of Starting the
Family Car*

The farm telephone, the coming of labour-saving devices and the low-price auto are three of the greatest factors in checking the admittedly large migration from the farm.

[Mr. Coote.]

Probably no mechanical invention has done so much as the low-priced automobile to lessen the monotony of farm life, particularly for people living on the prairies a long distance from the railways, and nothing has done so much to relieve the monotony of life for the farm women. Many of these people, prior to the coming of the automobile, were limited to their own farms. They are too far from town to drive there with a horse and rig. As I said before, approximately one-third of the farmers in Alberta are able to own motor cars, and I think the only reason the other two-thirds do not own them is that they are too dear at the present time. The Ford Times said recently:

Every sure enough farm needs three automobiles—any farmer with a family will vouch for that and that number is his goal.

Then it goes on to show that he needs a truck, a roadster and a Ford sedan to take him to town in bad weather.

I would be pretty well satisfied, Mr. Speaker, if we had on an average one automobile to each farm, and I should like to say to the editor of the Ford Times that there is only one reason why there are not more automobiles on the farm, that reason being that the Ford Company have kept the price too high. If we reduce the duty the company would have to reduce the price and they would sell more. The Ford Times goes on to point out that only one-third of the farmers of Canada have motor cars. There is another reason why this is a very important question for Canada. We have for the past twenty or twenty-five years been trying to encourage the automobile business in Canada with a protective tariff of 35 per cent. Many other incidentals enter into it with which I shall deal later, and which give it a protection really of about 40 per cent.

Looking over a booklet recently issued by the automotive industries of Canada, I find that from 1904 to 1924 they have manufactured and sold in Canada 793,519 cars. The wholesale value of these cars is \$699,237,511. To get the retail value of these cars, we must add to that amount one-third, which would bring the total retail value of these cars to \$932,316,681, or an average value, without excise and sales tax, of \$1,174. The total extra cost—I am assuming here that these cars were sold to the Canadian public at an advance of 35 per cent over the American price—the total extra cost of these cars to the consumers of Canada was \$242,000,000. That means an average increased price to the consumer of these cars in Canada of \$305 per car. This price does not take into account sales tax and excise tax.