

the small amount of good we would do English manufacturers by leaving the tariff as it is now. To use an old expression we would be paying through the nose. From a national standpoint I would suggest it would not pay us to maintain this tariff, something which eventually would build up a sort of baby aeroplane industry in Canada, an industry which would have to be babied for years to come. I should like to see the matter tackled now before developments have gone too far. Certainly I have no desire to delay passage of these items, but I have brought the matter to the minister's attention simply to impress upon him its importance. I do not believe it would do any harm to have the tariff board examine into the whole matter.

Mr. RALSTON: I have only one or two observations to make. In connection with the building up of a Canadian aeroplane industry I believe I may say to the hon. member that so far the history of that industry in Canada has been one of grief and disaster. Any duty which has been imposed has not been sufficient to build up what the hon. member has described as a Canadian aircraft industry. I agree with him that if we could possibly get along with importations it would be far better for us to avail ourselves of aircraft manufactured in Great Britain and the United States rather than with our limited population and comparatively small demand to attempt the development of an industry of our own. There is only one reservation regarding strategy and defence. It is possible that for those reasons an industry of the kind might be encouraged to operate, but when I had the honour to have some responsibility I was not convinced of that, although I did my very best to give work to the industries in Canada which in a limited way were manufacturing aircraft.

I believe the hon. member is quite sound so far as his observations concerning commercial aircraft are concerned, unless it be that we should have a nucleus of an industry for purposes of strategy or defence. So far as the British aeroplane is concerned I do not think my hon. friend's information is quite correct; I have some doubt about it. I have found that one could obtain almost any type of plane he wished from a British manufacturer. I have this to say, however, that as aviation is playing a great part in our national development, aircraft ought to be available as cheaply as possible. I am in favour of the British preference. I should like to see the British aircraft industry given an edge, and I agree, with the minister, that in view of the remoteness of the place of manufacturing from the

[Mr. Coote.]

market and additional sales expense the British aircraft industry does not have a great deal of the edge in this market. I agree with the hon. member who has taken his seat, however, that one of the basic elements in connection with our national development is as extensive, and strong a development of aviation as possible. If the aircraft we want cannot be obtained in Great Britain at a fair price it seems to me that we might well consider the suggestion of the hon. member that there be a reduction in the duty on American aircraft. Aviation is too important to be throttled by high duties. Instead of prohibiting the importation of American aircraft, the tariff has only had the effect of producing revenue. Aircraft comes in from the United States just the same and when you divide the amount of duty by the total number of miles travelled I do not think you will find that the cost of air transportation has been greatly increased. It seems to me that there are two points: first whether British aircraft is absolutely satisfactory for all purposes and secondly if the duty against American aircraft adds any substantial cost to the development of aviation in this country.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): From my short experience here in Ottawa I have come to the conclusion that there will be too many restrictions in connection with this item, no matter how it is phrased. The government will have to take the responsibility of reducing the duty. I can remember quite well when we reduced the duty on automobiles some years ago. There was a tremendous amount of opposition exhibited by the companies themselves but the reduction did not hurt them. I am not at all sure that the purchaser got the full advantage of the reduction and I am confident that the duty on automobiles could be reduced very materially without doing the industry any harm. There are a number of items where reductions could be made. There could be a very substantial reduction in the duty on farm machinery. The tariff board will hear all sorts of objections, valid and otherwise, from manufacturers in connection with the reduction of duties, but the fact remains that for years the people of this country have been paying through the nose for machinery needed in the development of this country. So far as I am concerned I believe that the only way to cure this situation is to reduce the duties and if this is done I think we will still have the manufacturers in this country. I believe the ingenuity of the Canadian manufacturers and mechanics is such as to enable the meeting of competition from any part of the world. I am sick and tired of hearing of mass