

about 500 firms across Canada which would be adversely affected by the imposition of this levy of an extra 7.5 per cent. The figures were provided to me in an interesting way. We have to remember that the largest proportion of these particular items are imported from the United States and Britain. I think Allison engines and air frames are imported from the United States.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) has been borrowing money all over the country and all over the world. He has been getting lines of credit to sort out our Canadian dollar, but we are still faced with importing goods which are going to cost an extra 11 or 12 cents on the dollar. This bill does not deal with that, and that is one of the problems we are facing. There was a time when there was an advantage to importing. There was a time when we got one per cent or two per cent premium on the Canadian dollar. Importers now have to pay 11 or 12 cents more in order to buy U.S. dollars to settle their accounts. That is the first levy, 11 or 12 per cent. Let us use 12 per cent.

On top of that there is going to be a new customs duty of 7.5 per cent. That will bring the cost of any particular item up to about \$1.20, or a 20 per cent increase on imported items. Our Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner) has praised our sagging dollar for what it does for our exports. No one can deny that it is helpful to exports. Unfortunately, we are an importing country too, and amongst the things we import are aircraft and aircraft engines. The cost is now \$1.20, or a 20 per cent increase. On top of that there is federal sales tax of about 12 per cent, which takes us up to about \$1.34, a 34 per cent increase. On top of that there is a 10 per cent excise duty, which takes us up to \$1.48.

In other words, for every dollar's worth of aircraft or engines or engine parts imported into this country, the Canadian user will have to pay an extra 48 cents over the market price. There are a dozen firms in my area which are afflicted with this problem of a falling dollar in addition to the prospect of having to face a new customs duty, sales tax, and excise tax. I am not sure which comes on first, but a 48 per cent increase is an intolerable burden to be placed on small business.

If an aircraft suffers a broken axle on landing, or a damaged wing as it dips when it is coming in, those elements have to be imported, and the cost will be 48 per cent more. If those parts can be made in Canada, there is no problem. Today in the question period we were talking about a dreadful, fatal accident at Cranbrook airport. PWA now has to import a whole new aircraft. Let us say the cost will be \$6 million. When 48 per cent is added to that, on a quick calculation I would say the cost will be something in the order of \$8.5 million for an aircraft which otherwise would cost about \$6 million. This new 7.5 per cent levy which is being considered for aircraft parts, air frames and aircraft engines will impose a needless burden on a growing industry of technicians who have developed self respect and who are contributing considerably to the economy of our country.

There is one other element of this industry which baffles me. I have been in correspondence with the ministry on this matter. By administrative ruling a distinction has been made

between a licensed carrier, and the freedom with which he can import, and a service organization which is not a licensed carrier, and the imposition of the customs duty and sales tax on a rebatable basis.

The matter which was brought to my attention involved the importation of an aircraft engine on which a duty of \$1,128.75 had to be paid. Customs said, "Don't worry, you will get it back". Customs just had to process it. Customs collected the money and paid it back, and that took two months. That is bureaucratic nonsense. If a licensed carrier can bring in a replacement part—for example, an engine—duty free, there is no reason in the world why a person who is not a licensed carrier should pay a duty which is rebatable. There is no sense in that at all. The only justification I can see is that it keeps some public servants employed going through papers. I do not think public servants enjoy being employed in that way. They prefer useful work. There must be some way of getting around this stupidity, and I should like to see efforts made to do so.

● (1622)

There is another item with which I should like to deal, one which is in the schedule today. I am writing to the ministers concerned with this matter, but I feel I want to mention it now. It has to do with the imposition of a customs duty on a drug product used in treating a chronic disease. Its purchase imposes a very heavy burden on those who use it. The drug in question is a megavitamin used in the treatment of multiple sclerosis—M.S., as it is popularly called, and with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall use the abbreviation as being somewhat easier to pronounce. Megavitamins are used as a treatment, and some people believe them to be a cure.

In fact I was talking today to a man who had been afflicted with M.S. and who has undergone a course of treatment at considerable expense. He has since returned to my riding—he is a music teacher—and is now cured, though he has to continue his treatment. I might add that before he left his doctor told him he would be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. This man, like others in a similar position, has to pay customs duty on the drug product he uses. That is nonsense, Mr. Speaker. It does not create revenue of any significance for the consolidated revenue fund, but it does cause great hardship, particularly in areas where pharmacare does not cover the cost of vitamins. In British Columbia, for example, I gather that vitamins as a class of drug are exempted from the pharmacare program.

Let us consider just what is involved here, bearing in mind that a person who suffers from M.S. is likely to be confined to a wheelchair and is almost certain to be partially removed from the labour market. We are speaking of people who cannot in the normal course of things find work, unlike most of us here who might, for instance, become lumbermen if we were tough enough. But the M.S. sufferers cannot do this, and they are the people who are being asked to pay, in this case 17½ per cent according to one of the ratings by which megavitamins are allowed to enter this country. They are not made here in Canada, but if they come through on prescription in the