

Supply—Transport

I refer to all aircraft in Canada of under 5,000 pounds all-up weight.

Mr. Chairman, the whole field ought to be reviewed. Knowing the competence of the members of the entire department, the review will not be a difficult one. I think that the officials of the department should survey the whole question with this in mind: How many of the aircraft reviewed were made in Canada? How many could have been made in Canada had there been some action, or some stimulus on the part of the federal government to foster and encourage in Canada the construction of a truly all-Canadian aircraft?

In Canada our aircraft industry has developed some of the finest aircraft in the world, but they are highly specialized. They have been designed to meet special needs in our northland and in our bush areas. No attention has been paid to them, except by one or two very hardy souls. No attention has been paid to the whole field of a truly Canadian light aircraft. We have one prototype, the Cheetah, whose designer and original constructor has been running around the country trying to sell it. He has a good piece of equipment. It is well built, but he will never make the grade I am afraid because he has not the support from a government that should be concerned about the high level now reached in the importation of aircraft from the United States into this country.

I think the government, Mr. Chairman, should very seriously consider the objectives of the Department of Transport or of the Department of Industry. I would ask the minister to give serious consideration to the establishment of a fund of money which would not purport to hide itself in any mist of subsidy, but which would be an outright grant to the Canadian aircraft industry of up to \$5 million, for the design, development and building of a prototype of a truly light aircraft, for pleasure or for commercial purposes here in Canada. I suggest that Canada needs badly a fixed gear single engine high-wing aircraft that can be used for pleasure flying and for flight training. If we do not do it we are going to see the entire market flooded, from now until eternity I am afraid, with products from across the border. Mind you, they are excellent aircraft, but they are not better than we can build here ourselves.

The level of buying in Canada now is reflected in these figures, that as of December 31, 1965 there were 7,542 aircraft registered in Canada. Of these 5,205 were private aircraft, the average cost of which was from

between \$10,000 to \$20,000. That, Mr. Chairman, represents a substantial industry.

I suggest to the minister as he and everybody else probably knows, that the vast majority of these light, private aircraft are made in a country other than Canada, and that they could very well be made here, if the industry could be encouraged to design, develop and get some prototypes on the market.

Other interesting figures I might point out are a 25 per cent increase in the number of licences issued by the minister's department, including private, commercial and other upgraded tickets. The vast majority of these, of course, are private licences. During the past year 9,094 people received an upgrading of their licence or a new private flying licence. If that number of pilots and that number of aircraft does not warrant considerably more active consideration directed to the industry than it now receives from the federal government, then I am afraid it will be a long time before the opportunity which exists right now again presents itself to the government.

● (8:20 p.m.)

There exists a very strong base for the government to justify the introduction of admittedly substantial sums of money, but the returns would be manifold, and all to the good of the industry. May I commend that suggestion to the minister. If we do this, then, we have policies in Canada that are designed to protect our own manufacturers when they have achieved some 10 per cent, say, of the market. Recently the government saw fit to impose a 15 per cent duty on certain types of aircraft coming into Canada in order to protect Brown Brothers and their new aircraft. Mr. Chairman, I suggest to the minister that again the new aircraft is highly specialized, and in no way suited to private use. I do not think a competent instructor would take it upon himself to teach in one of them. That is not what it was designed or built for. We are concerned about the protection of the aircraft industry in Canada and we take good measures to protect it. I think this is a good measure but I also think it has been misapplied. The impact of taxes on general aviation among the smaller operators will have a disastrous effect and this will always be the case as long as we approach this question in a piecemeal fashion.

I use the present illustration to underline the need to develop aircraft in Canada which will cover the whole range. Then, when we