

**AIRCRAFT BOARD
THOUGH BLAMED,
WAS POWERLESS.**

**Limit Placed on Its Authority
Hampered Efforts to Push
Construction Work—Com-
mittee Discloses Futile Ex-
pense.**

Washington D. C.—The Senate Military subcommittee investigating aircraft production, in its report submitted on Thursday, said failure to adopt successful foreign airplanes and motors, waste of millions of dollars or aircraft appropriations, dominance of the airplane program by inexperienced automobile manufacturers "un-systematic and ineffective" organization, and excessive profits to manufacturers have been disclosed. Disclaiming wholesale condemnation of the aircraft program, the subcommittee praised much that has been accomplished, and predicted "We are approaching a period when quantity production of planes soon may be hoped for." The report is impersonal and says all questions of dishonesty or official corruption are left to the Department of Justice's inquiry, conducted by Charles E. Hughes.

While condemning chiefly failures under the former Aircraft Production Board and Signal Corps control, and noting great improvements since John D. Ryan and Major-General Kony were placed in charge of the production and military branches, the committee strongly urged "one man control" in the future. Part of the blame for poor organization at the start is assigned to Congress.

Stating that "much can be said in extenuation of disappointments in aircraft production," the committee's report details delays and failures, including transportation to General Pershing of defective machines during more than a year's efforts to secure domination of the air on the fighting front.

The original \$640,000,000 appropriated by Congress for aviation in July 1917, says the report, has been exhausted and "practically wasted" with \$886,000,000 more found necessary. It adds:

"While an army of 3,500,000 has been raised, the aircraft situation is as follows:

"Six hundred and one de Havilland fours have been embarked for France up to Aug. 1, 1918. Of these 67 had reached the front by July 1.

"On Aug 7 a squadron of 18 de Havilland fours flew over the German lines. Details of its performance have not been received.

"We have not a single American-made chase (or plane of attack) upon the battlefield.

"We have not a single American-made heavy bombing plane upon the battlefield.

"We have not developed and put in quantity production a successful chase, or fighting plane."

Other criticisms include:

Abandonment of the standard J training machine after 1200 had been built at a cost of \$6,000,000 and condemned as dangerous.

Cancellation of orders for 3,000 Spad single-seated fighting machines last September as obsolete and afterward ordering 1000 S. E. S. single-seated Spads.

Abandonment of the British fighting machine "after expenditure of the \$6,000,000 and the loss of several lives."

Delay in developing the de Havilland machine; failure to rush manufacture of the Caproni and Handley-Page heavy bombing machines; failure to develop an airplane around the Liberty Motor; incompetency of inspectors; location of flying fields at unsuitable sites; failure to encourage airplane production; patent monopolies of the original inventors.

"In the opinion of the committee," the report states, "the disappointing results are chiefly due to three causes:

"1. That the airplane program was largely placed in the control of great automobile and other manufacturers who were ignorant of aeronautical problems.

"2. These manufacturers undertook the impossible task of creating a motor which could be adapted to all classes of flying craft. It is not too much to say that our airplane program has been largely subordinated to the Liberty motor.

"3. We failed at the beginning of the war to adopt the common-sense course of reproducing the most approved types of European machines in as great numbers as possible. This should have been carried on coincident with the production of the Liberty motor. This sound policy has been adopted very recently, but after a lamentable lapse of time."

"The mistakes and errors referred to," the report continues, "would probably have been largely avoided if the aircraft program had been under the control of one man, assisted by skilled aeronautical engineers and practical flyers to design and test our machines, with production made subordinate to them."

The Liberty 12-cylinder motor was declared to be "excellent for heavier planes and other purposes but too

heavy and powerful for lighter types." "It is not yet perfect," the committee reported, "but is improving under repeated experiments. It is now in quantity production, more than 4000 have been delivered, and is approved by our allies, who are anxious to obtain more of them than we can at present supply. In the development of this motor, the aircraft board has performed an important task, for which due credit should be given. But the announcement that it had been evolved in a few days was unfounded, and the notion which was encouraged that it could be used for planes of all sizes and character was largely responsible for delays to our planes production.

"Motor production has proved to be a formidable task, magnified in some degree by the reluctance of the designers to promptly accept and act upon suggestions of imperfection from competent engineers and critics and fliers and make changes in conformity with them.

"Manufacture of the best foreign motors contemporaneously with the development of an American engine would have been a sounder policy. That it was partially adopted later confirmed this conclusion. We are doing what we should have done a year ago, and are producing the Hispano-Suiza motor in quantity."

After deploring failure to build the Rolls-Royce motor and French motors, the committee added:

"No fighting plane of American or other design has been built around the Liberty engine, although it is an axiom in aeronautics that planes must be adapted to motors. Until a Liberty plane is successfully built around a Liberty motor by competent aeronautic engineers, and thoroughly tested, our air program will not be complete."

Efficiency in administration was impossible, the committee declares, with the Aircraft Production Board exercising authority without responsibility.

Telling in detail of efforts last fall to adopt the Spad, Bristol and De Havilland fours to the Liberty motor, the committee states that the Bristol is overloaded, its wings strained, "and the board was compelled to stop production." Some of the \$6,500,000 spent on this experiment, it says, may be salvaged. Orders given in Sept., 1917, to the Curtis Company for 3000 one-seater Spad planes—"an excellent French biplane now in use on the front," were cancelled, it is stated because installation of the eight-cylinder Liberty motor, which was soon discarded, was insisted upon by the board. No attempt was made to make single-seater fighting machines until last May.

The committee states that 1000 S. E. fives were ordered by Mr. Ryan and "probably will be" in production during the coming autumn.

The production of training planes has been fairly adequate, the report declares. "There is no reason to apprehend that training-plane production will fall below the requirements of the service."

The De Havilland four, designed as "the only so-called fighting plane now in actual production," was given especial attention by the committee. Contracts have been let for 8500, and on Aug. 1 about 1000 had been delivered.

On June 25, the committee states, General Pershing reported "many defects" in those delivered, and stated they could not be used until corrected, and demanded thorough test and inspection before more were shipped. Opinions of experts regarding the De Havilland as to possibility of correcting defects, differed, the committee says, adding:

"But the assertion that the plane is very unsafe in the condition in which it has been, up to this time, delivered from the 'factory,' was practically unanimous. Deliveries of the machines continued, notwithstanding and many were sent to France in precisely the condition complained of in General Pershing's cable message. On Aug. 2 an order was issued to all the factories directing that no more of them be delivered until the corrections required were made. We are informed that production under those new conditions is about to be resumed."

Forty De Havilland fours, sent to Long Island fields last month were tested and were pronounced "structurally weak and defective," the committee states. Of 156 deliveries to the navy, it is said, tests at Miami, Fla., developed the same defects reported by General Pershing, 100 crated at embarkation points being returned to the aircraft board. Admiral Sims reports defects in about 50 already shipped. Regarding the De Havilland generally, the committee says:

"Evidence ranging from qualified approval to severest condemnation shows that the de Havilland four is chiefly available for observation purposes. That the War Department and Aircraft Board share this view is best evidenced by the fact that it is to be replaced by machines of later design as speedily as possible without complete suspension of production.

"With the exception of the S. E. 5 and the Handley-Page in parts, no other type of fighting plane can be

produced in quantity before 1919."

Early in 1917, the report says, this country contracted with England and France for fighting planes, of which 2114 have been delivered. It continues:

"This enables us to maintain 13 squadrons of 18 flyers each on the front," a force wholly inadequate to meet requirements of modern warfare. It should also be stated that as our troops are moving to France in great numbers, the disparity may increase until we get into quantity production."

Despite the assurances that foreign fighting machines would be available in sufficient numbers, given by Secretary Baker, Major-General Squier and Colonel Deeds, according to the report inability of the United States to furnish raw material prevented France from forwarding machines contracted for.

"Besides this," the report continues, "many of the machines our men are now forced to use in France are unsatisfactory, but not more so than those used by the French themselves. An army officer, recently at the front, testified that American troops are using many antique machines purchased from the French that were discarded by them a year and a half ago. They are using the Sopwith which has been declared unsafe. They use a Spad two-seater which is unreliable and unsatisfactory. It, therefore, is reassuring to reflect that all commands are unified in France, with all the lines of the service under common protection."

Regarding signal corps inspection of airplanes, the report states it has "functioned badly," with defective material accepted, then condemned, and afterward finding its way back to producers.

Regarding training fields, the committee says their estimated cost is \$52,500,000 exclusive of that at Miami Fla., "established by Col. E. A. Deeds, a member of the board, on his own responsibility and without the knowledge or sanction of the head of the Equipment Division."

In another reference to Colonel Deeds, it is stated that he was the

owner of McCook Field at Dayton, O., and part owner of another field for which negotiations were begun. "He sold and transferred them," the committee said, "to interests with which he had been identified and which now own them."

Although Langley Field, near Newport News, was wisely chosen and well fitted, costing \$3,004,000 the committee says it was practically abandoned for training and experimental work and McCook Field was leased.

"McCook Field is not only too small for satisfactory experimental flying, but its environment is unfavorable," the reports adds. Danger of floods in the marshy ground of Wilbur Wright Field at Dayton was noted, but the committee said about \$3,000,000 expended there justified its retention. In-sistence by the Dayton Wright company for rental of an additional field, in which Colonel Deeds was said to be interested, caused abandonment of the program.

Chairman Thomas put into the record a letter from Howard E. Coffin, former chairman of the Aircraft Production Board, denying that he or the other civilian members of the board were in any way responsible for delays in the army program. He said decisions as to the types and letting of contracts were in the hands of the War and Navy departments, and suggested it was significant that the navy, bearing the same relation to the board as the army, had gone ahead with its program at high speed.

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Personal Letter to Farmers.

By J. R. Patterson.

I would like to say to my farmer friends and patrons a word in regard to tobacco and the handling and selling of same. In the first place let your tobacco get ripe. Do not pull or cut it green, and after you put it in the barn let it get yellow. You can not beat sponged tobacco selling, it always sells well. And again, bear in mind you loose money when you let your tobacco get too soft in order. Wet tobacco never sells for the best prices. Bring it in good order. And again this will be the time to save all of your scrap Tobacco. It will sell high again this time and bear in mind to keep it clean, clear of trash and dirt and by all means do not wet it. Labor is so scarce and high we can not afford to pay a man the price we have to pay to pick scraps and pay you what we could and would pay for it if it were clean. Prices are high and we think will continue so until all of this crop of tobacco is sold. We think the average will be some higher than last year. We do not think there will be any complaint made by any body that the price is not satisfactory. I have just returned from Danville, Va., where I attended the opening sale there on the 15th of the present month and prices are good.

Let me say to you now you can't do better than to sell here at Mount Airy—your home market. All of the big tobacco companies have buyers here as well as most of the independent companies of the country. You can always hear great thing to be had a long way off, and when you go to get them, they are often not there. I think I can safely say for the Tobacco Board of trade that they want you to sell here, and none of them would wish you to do so at a loss to yourselves. Therefore we will pay you gladly all our limits will permit us to pay. And bear in mind we have the same limit the other fellow buys under elsewhere. So we will be glad to see you bring your tobacco to Mt. Airy and help build your home market when it certainly costs you nothing to do it.

I would like to say further that I am again at the same stand, Headquarters for you, 'Banner Warehouse' where we have very much improved things—by building first class camp rooms and office, fixed upstairs, etc. I think you who have sold tobacco with us in the past will appreciate our efforts and feel that your interest is safe when in our hands. And I assure you we will continue to always put forth our best efforts, and will see that you get the top price for every pile sold with us. Mr. Lovill and myself follow all sales, and watch every pile sold on our floor, and we will not let you down when you sell with us. I feel that I have acted in a way since being connected with this house to merit your confidence and support which you have so liberally bestowed upon me in the past, and I earnestly hope you may continue to patronize us in the future. Feeling assured you will be rewarded by the best prices to be obtained anywhere on any market. Thanking you in advance for your first load of tobacco,

I am your very truly,
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PUT IT THERE, SON!



We've got a big job before us—making the world a decent place to live in. You're too young to go into the army line, but I'm mighty proud to see you go into the hoeing line. You're a "soldier of the soil," and by working on the farm you can produce every day food sufficient to feed four soldiers. It is not an easy job to tackle—no easier than mine. It tests your mettle the same as ours will be tested in the trenches. But the work you do on the farm as a member of the United States Boys' Working Reserve is just as important as ours, and I'm glad to go to the front because I know you will fight just as hard at home to give us food as we will in the trenches. So long! Good luck—and STICK!

The U. S. Boys' Working Reserve was organized by the Government as a part of the U. S. Employment Service, Department of Labor, to mobilize the boy power of the nation. Because the farms needed help, the Boys' Working Reserve has confined its efforts chiefly to sending young men workers to the farms. At least a-quarter million Reserve boys will take part in farming operations this summer. Many of these young men have been trained in the rudiments of farming in high school courses and in training camps established under the auspices of the Reserve in many states. The Boys' Working Reserve is dedicated to the task of making a producer out of every physically fit boy who is not employed or is in a non-useful occupation.

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U. S. Dept. of Labor Washington, D. C.

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