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CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Adopted: July 22, 1949

Released: July 22, 1949

ERCOUPE E, NEAR CONCORD, PENNSYLVANIA, APRIL 23, 1949

On April 23, 1949, an aircraft of Canadian registry was damaged extensively in a landing prompted by severe turbulence near Concord, Pennsylvania. Glen Willis House, a Canadian commercial pilot with approximately 275 hours flying time, and his wife, who was riding as a passenger, sustained no injuries other than minor bruises. The new Ercoupe E, Canadian identification CF-GLZ, was owned by the pilot.

Pilot House had recently purchased the airplane and was ferrying it from the factory in Riverdale, Maryland, to his home in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. En route he landed at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, refueled, and took off from there at 1500EST, April 23. Weather conditions over his intended route were reported as clear with westerly winds of increasing velocity up to 30 mph.

Approximately twenty-five minutes after leaving Harrisburg, the flight encountered severe turbulence while flying at an altitude of 1,000 feet above the terrain in the vicinity of Concord. During this period of turbulence the pilot's safety belt, which was insecurely fastened, allowed him to be thrown repeatedly against the plexi-glass top which ultimately broke, permitting his head and shoulders to go through. The

pilot lost control of the aircraft and before he could attempt recovery was spiralling down toward the side of the mountain well below the peak. The pilot stated that he then had difficulty in controlling the aircraft and therefore decided to land immediately in the only clearing ahead. By the use of power he reached this clearing, cut the switch and intentionally stalled the aircraft into the side of the hill from an altitude of about 25 to 30 feet.

Although the airplane was damaged considerably in the landing, examination of the wreckage disclosed no evidence of failure or malfunctioning in flight.

The Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the pilot's failure to fasten his safety belt securely which resulted in temporary loss of control of the airplane in unexpectedly severe turbulence.

BY THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD.

/s/ JOSEPH J O'CONNELL, JR

/s/ OSWALD RYAN

/s/ RUSSELL B ADAMS

Josh Lee and Harold A. Jones, Members of the Board, did not participate in the adoption of this report.