

Statement by Frost On Arrow Decision

Following is the text of Premier Frost's statement in the Legislature on Ottawa's decision to drop the Avro Arrow program:

The decision announced in Ottawa relative to the Arrow plane is one of the highest importance and could have momentous effects.

The province and her municipalities, of course, have nothing to say and could not possibly be consulted in relation to the high policy relating to this important matter concerning nation defense. Those decisions are made elsewhere and upon considerations and upon facts which are not shared with the Provincial Government or the Ontario municipalities concerned.

Where the Ontario Government has a very definite interest and concern is in relation to the commitments made by the Provincial Government, by the municipalities concerned in relation to servicing the very vast requirements of the Avro and Arrow projects. These commitments are huge. They have been undertaken in good faith.

We have never been consulted by the Ottawa Government now or in the past in relation to defense requirements, but as I said, commitments have been made in good faith for schools, roads, sewers, waterworks, housing projects and a host of other things.

The Government is also very much concerned with the plight of thousands of individuals who have been brought together to service this defense project.

Therefore, provincial interest and concern relates not to the Arrow nor to defense projects, because those are decisions for the Canadian Government.

What we are concerned with, and must be concerned with, are the commitments made by the Ontario Government, the municipalities and by thousands of individuals, which were made in good faith and in this regard, the Canadian Government has a very definite responsibility, and one which cannot be answered merely by a change of policy.

I gather from the prime minister's statement that other and more modern defense weapons are to be constructed. Such being the case, I would take it as fundamental that Avro and the related and supporting industries and, by reason of this, the municipalities, the province and the individuals would receive the first consideration in an alternative program.

I think very clearly the problem now is to provide a reasonable substitute program to take care of the municipalities and the thousands of individuals who are affected by this change of policy.