

MAY 1955

# Air Defense Needs Planning

By Victor Koby

Canada's Government appears to be falling down on one of its most important responsibilities—the long range planning of the air defense of Canada.

No more serious criticism could be made by any publication. If it is true, then the blame must be borne by all Canadians, for under our system of government we are responsible for it and its actions in the eyes of those abroad.

Four years ago the Government announced a three-year defense build-up which was to cost \$5 billions. By last year that amount—the approximate figure of \$5,137,565,000—had been spent. Most of the goals of 1951 have been met.

But defense is a flexible thing which must be constantly adjusted with reference to the possible threat. In the period since 1951 we have learned the Russians have an H bomb and intercontinental jet bombers to carry it.

Except for the construction of the mid-Canada early warning radar chain, Canada, as far as is known, has made little attempt to change its long range defense plans to meet this new threat. In the U. S. the air defense goals of 1950 are being met. But the U. S. Government has been extremely worried about the changing threat.

President Eisenhower, last summer, proposed an expansion of the continental and civil defense programs. He wasted few words in pointing out the reason: the Soviet Union has succeeded in exploding a thermonuclear (hydrogen) device and now is capable of atomic attack on the U. S.

Aware of the need for a better continental defense, the U. S. has embarked upon a billion-dollar guided missile program. It is also building the billion-dollar defense early warning (DEW) line across the top of Canada. Now, we understand, there's a good chance USAF interceptor bases may be set up in Canada.

We have learned the U. S. forces now maintain about 5,000 men in Canada. Few would argue that Canada alone could financially support the defense of the North American continent. But are we doing enough?

If U. S. fighter interceptors in Canada start to outnumber those of the RCAF, or even equal them in strength, few Canadians could talk of Canada's defense with pride. Surely at a time when other free nations ask Canada for greater defense efforts is no time to cut taxes—a short term gain in the face of annihilation.

There is a lack of planning. Canada's guided-missile program is far from ready. The CF-100 continental defense squadrons are not yet up to planned strength. This is no fault of the RCAF. What it has is efficient and first class but it is short of trained men. Only government policy and planning can rectify these shortages and delays.

Then there is the problem of the industry.

The management of Canada's aircraft industry can do no more than carry out efficient production. It has done this. In the last ten years the industry has turned out 4,400 aircraft of eighteen different types, well over 2,000 jet engines and numerous other engines. This is an accomplishment industry can be proud of. It has met government demands fully when the demands are planned.

But the Government has a responsibility towards this giant industry it has built up. Yet without thought to the current unemployment situation in Canada or the threat of cold war the Government has instructed Avro to lay off men.

Only last January Defense Minister Campney said that Canada's allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization urgently needed and wanted CF-100's, as a Toronto paper has pointed out. That being the case, why are they not getting them?

Why should the rate of delivery of CF-100's be cut from 25 to 10 planes a month? Why, if Avro can produce CF-100's faster than the RCAF can take them (because of manpower shortage), does not Ottawa ship the surplus to the NATO members?

This is not an isolated case. The same depletion of trained manpower has been going on at Canadair and elsewhere in the industry. There is clearly a major need for government planning and action.

★ ★ ★

## A Job Well Done

The Air Industries and Transport Association deserves special praise for its recent accomplishments on behalf of the industry.

It is mainly through its efforts that Canadian Class A carriers (commercial operators of large aircraft) are being given first priority in participation in the DEW line airlift. U. S. and Canadian military aircraft could have been used or U. S. commercial carriers. Officials of the AITA, with the co-operation of the Department of Transport, have given Canada's air operators a chance to show what they can do.

In another field the AITA has helped win a major concession from the Government in a reduction of tariffs on many items of a class and kind not made in Canada. To the industry and operators who have had to bear a heavy financial burden on imports these tariff changes mean some easing of the strain of rising costs.

322