

Seek Specialist Advice on Arrow

Your article on the Arrow brings attention to a remarkable lack of policy on the part of our "leaders", the politicians at Ottawa, who, if the reports of their various public statements are to be believed, demonstrate an appalling ignorance of aviation in general, and the Arrow and the defense of North America in particular.

To quote only two of many examples, the Prime Minister, in his September statement on the future of the Arrow, said that his best military advisers could only foresee a generally diminishing requirement for the Arrow in the next few years. It is obvious that both he and his "advisers" did not ascertain the views of General E. E. Partridge, Commander of NORAD, who recently stated: "The days of the manned fighter are far from over," or his deputy, Air Marshal C. R. Slemon, RCAF, who told a press conference recently: "The interceptor's task, particularly in the fringe areas of the air defense system, such as Canada, favors long-range two-seater interceptors." . . . The CF-105 (Arrow), if it enters operational service, will be the highest performance, all-weather interceptor available until the advent of the USAF's F-108, which is not likely to become fully operational for about another five or six years or so."

It is to be hoped that the strongest possible pressure will be put on Mr. Diefenbaker in the House for an explanation of this contradiction of his statement, and that of his advisers, by the heads of NORAD, to whom the air defense of this continent is entrusted, and who must know what aircraft are required for this task.

General Pearkes, during his recent visit to the NATO Conference at Paris, was reported as saying that the NATO forces in Europe

cannot use the Arrow, as they do not have SAGE, on which the Arrow depends. If this is a true report of what the Minister of Defense did say, it once again illustrates a most serious lack of knowledge of the Arrow among senior Government Ministers, who, one would have thought, would be better acquainted with the facts. The Arrow can be completely independent of SAGE if required, and is designed to be a completely self-contained unit when required.

The subjects of the Arrow, and the air defense of Canada, are, I feel, far too serious to be left to lawyers and retired army generals. Has the time not come when this country requires a specialist, such as a senior RCAF officer, to serve as Minister for Air, to give the Government an impartial, but above all accurate, view of the aeronautical requirements of this country, both in the civil and military spheres?

Finally, I would like to protest against the irresponsible way in which costs are presented regarding the Arrow. Apart from the fact that these Government figures are remarkably elastic, according to what they are seeking to prove, I think far too much emphasis has been placed on what the Arrow has cost to date; this has already been spent and should now be ignored in the discussions. The future costs are the ones that matter.

It is a well known fact that statistics can be made to prove anything, and when the figures can be adjusted as well, there is really no limit to what can be "proved". Your article gives the cost of 100 Arrows as \$375,000,000, while a recent White Paper gives the United Kingdom beer consumption for three months as \$425,000,000. Perhaps the Arrow is not so expensive after all.

Port Credit,

A. C. Smith.

March 25, 1959.