

Address by the Hon. George R. Pearkes, V.C.,

Minister of National Defence

Avro Arrow Roll Out Ceremony

Avro Aircraft Ltd. Malton, Ont.

October 4, 1957

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Fifty years ago a great Canadian pioneer, John McCurdy, flew the Silver Dart, the first aircraft in Canada, in fact it was the first heavier-than-air plane to fly in the British Commonwealth. History recognizes that event as the beginning of Canada's air age. This event today marks another milestone--the production of the first Canadian supersonic aeroplane. I am sure that the historian of tomorrow will regard this event as being equally as significant in the annals of Canadian aviation.

The supersonic era of flight is just beginning. Many of today's aircraft are regularly breaking the sound barrier, but this is done at the extreme peak of their performance. Supersonic flight is still not a routine matter. Present aircraft travel at these exceptionally fast speeds for a relatively short period of time. The Avro Arrow, however, has been designed from the outset to operate supersonically throughout as much of its mission as is deemed necessary. It will be

equally at home on one side of the sound barrier as on the other. It will be a truly supersonic aircraft.

It is difficult for the layman to appreciate the magnitude and complexities of the problems of the last four years, culminating in this first phase of the Arrow project. Four years ago the Air Force and the industry set out together on a voyage into the unknown. All the technical difficulties which have been solved thus far have represented pioneering work in aerodynamics, metallurgy, mechanics and electronics and in all the related arts and sciences which form part of our aeronautical industry. Thus far progress has been commendably rapid. We are, of course, only part way along the road and no one would be so foolish as to suggest that the job is complete by any means.

Four years of design, testing, tooling and production problems lie behind. Many months of further tests, trials, complex development and modification lie ahead before this aircraft can be considered operationally acceptable. I understand it will be some years yet before this supersonic aircraft with its missile and guidance systems will be available for operational use. We are looking forward to this time.

It is important to appreciate the significance of proper timing in the introduction of weapons under today's conditions. Our weapons must not only be designed to be better than those of unfriendly nations but they must be ready in time to counteract those weapons should the need arise. If either the timing is wrong or the quality is wrong, we fail to maintain the proper balance of power in our goal towards presenting the most effective deterrent.

I would like to recognize the great number of Canadians in our industry who have contributed and will continue to contribute toward this project. I would also like to thank the personnel of those American agencies who have helped so materially in the aircraft's development. As the Chief of the Air Staff has said, the development of the Arrow has been an outstanding piece of co-operation between service and industrial agencies on an international level.

Much has been said of late about the coming missile age and there have been suggestions from well-intentioned people that the era of the manned aeroplane is over and that we should not be wasting our time and energy producing an aircraft of the performance, complexity and cost of the Avro Arrow. They suggest

that we should put our faith in missiles and launch straight into the era of push-button war. I do not feel that missiles and manned aircraft have, as yet, reached the point where they should be considered as competitive. They will, in fact, become complementary. Each can do things which the other cannot do, and for some years to come both will be required in the inventory of any nation seeking to maintain an adequate "deterrent" to war. However, the aircraft has this one great advantage over the missile. It can bring the judgment of a man into the battle and closer to the target where human judgment, combined with the technology of the aircraft, will provide the most sophisticated and effective defence that human ingenuity can devise.

The aircraft now being produced in the various countries of our NATO alliance may or may not be the last of the manned interceptors. With the rapid strides being made in the fields of science and engineering, it would be unwise to attempt to forecast the future in this respect. However, I feel sure that if these aircraft continue their development with the same promise as they have in the past, there is no doubt in my mind that they will be a necessary requirement to the arsenal of the west for many years to come.

In closing, I would like once again to commend the efforts of those who have contributed thus far to the development and production of this airplane. Through your efforts you are making a direct contribution to the defence of the free nations of the world and so to the well-being of us all.

I now have pleasure in unveiling the Avro Arrow--as Canada's first supersonic aircraft--a symbol of a new era for Canada in the air.