

# Avro's Chief In Secret Ottawa Talks

By CLARK DAVEY

Globe and Mail Staff Reporter

Ottawa, March 2 — Defense Minister Pearkes threw back in the teeth of Opposition critics today details of an intensive Government effort to provide work for the Avro and Orenda plants and their 13,800 employees.

Speaking with such force that he was often carried out beyond the Government benches and into the well of the Commons toward the Liberal seats, the defense minister said the Government had investigated dozens of possibilities to replace the cancelled Arrow program.

Mr. Pearkes said investigations were made in the five months between the time the Government served notice of the impending end of the Arrow and the outright cancellation.

Navy, air force and army teams of experts were into defense production plants and bases, airfields and missile sites from California to West Germany, checking on some of the missions, he said, Avro and defense production department officials accompanied the military investigators.

Riled by Opposition criticism of defense policies and planning for the second time in eight days, Mr. Pearkes gave a vigorous defense of Government actions which was his most effective and probably his best Commons speech since becoming minister.

At one point Mr. Pearkes said:

"If we (the Government) let our armor down we would be blamed."

He paused and seemed to muse for a moment. Then he added:

"There probably wouldn't be many people left to blame us."

Mr. Pearkes did not reveal that there had been a new round of top level and secret talks today between Government and company officials in Ottawa today.

Sir Roy Dobson, a major figure in the Hawker Siddeley organization in Britain and chairman of the Avro board, flew in from London for discussions with Prime Minister Diefenbaker, and others.

As a result there was no indication of what was discussed or what progress had been made. Apparently there were no arrangements for further meetings. Sir Roy was believed to have left Ottawa for Toronto tonight to meet Avro officials there.

Sir Roy and J. S. D. Tory, Avro vice-president, spent about an hour with the Prime Minister and Mr. Fleming and then had a 75-minute conference with Mr. Pearkes.

The visit is believed to have included an attempt to produce better relations between the company and the Government. Only a week ago, the prime minister had unleashed his blast at the company for what he construed as an attempt to embarrass the Government with the mass layoff. From England, Sir Roy had fired off a strongly worded denial which took issue with the basic decision itself on defense policy grounds.

Sir Roy probably was brought up to date on discussions last week with Avro officials, discussions which produced Government agreement to keep the nucleus of Avro's design, scientific and engineering staff together by picking up half the payroll costs for about 1,000 men for six months.

With that accomplished the Government and company are committed to finding a long-term solution to the problem of keeping the company alive.

Mr. Pearkes said that since Sept. 23 the Government has been doing everything possible to find alternative work.

RCAF, navy and army teams had visited the United States, Scotland, England, France, West Germany and Sweden in an effort to evaluate other aircraft, electronic gear and other items in an attempt to fit them into the Avro plant.