

# ★ STATEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER AVRO AIRCRAFT LIMITED

January 20th, 1959

To The Editor,  
Canadian Aeronaut.  
Sir:

With the re-opening of Parliament and the commencement of the debate in the House on the Speech from the Throne, the place of the Avro Arrow program in the national defense planning is re-emphasized for those of us at Avro.

In the light of the considerable attention being paid to the future of the Arrow, you have asked me to express my views, through the medium of your journal, as to the probable future course of the Arrow program, as it directly affects Avro and its people.

In general I can only repeat what I have said before: That the Prime Minister has announced that the development program for the Arrow will continue until the end of the Government fiscal year, March 31, when it will be reviewed in the light of the then existing circumstances.

In addition, I have expressed the opinion to you in the past that there is no question in the minds of those people who have to defend this continent that the Arrow is a vital link in our chain of defense and that these sentiments have been voiced by the top people in NORAD whose job it is to defend North America.

I made those statements as far back as September 24, shortly after the Prime Minister's announcement with regard to the Arrow, and as recently as shortly before our plant shutdown for the Christmas Holidays.

Nothing has happened over the four-month period which has elapsed to alter my thinking. And I say this in full knowledge of the great activity that has gone on, in the interim, in the communications media of television, radio, magazines and newspapers. This public debate in respect of our affairs is normal and natural by reason of the importance of the Arrow in over-all Canadian defense. It is part of our way of life, for the "Press" is charged with the traditional responsibility of giving full expression of opinion on matters of national interest and backing same

with editorial expressions of opinion of the editorial writers and publishers themselves.

This being so, the fact remains that few of us have escaped a restlessness, if not actual deep concern, as to the future of the Arrow and this Company as a result of much of this "Press" speculation.

All of us have individual preferences for newspapers, magazines and so on. Some listen to one radio station and others to different ones. Similarly, we have varying choice in our selection of newspapers and magazines and television programs. So it is that we pick up one paper and read where our program is virtually buried, and we turn to another paper and read where the Government has every intention of putting us into production. Then, we turn on our car radio or our home set and find an equal divergence of opinion at one twist of the dial.

To repeat myself, this is our way of life and this liberty of expression is one of our most cherished possessions. I am simply pointing out to you that a gloomy prediction in a communications media should not by any means spoil your day or plunge you into despondency. Instead, I would suggest that we all recall the facts. And they are: The Government is now reviewing its air defence policy and will make known its decision prior to or no later than March 31, according to the Prime Minister. All else, so far as public speculation is concerned, is just that and nothing more. Speculation.

In previous statements, I have asked you to carry on with your work to the best of your ability in this unhappy atmosphere as in the long run the decision will face up to the quality of our product and its capability. This you have done. So now, I am taking the liberty of congratulating you all, along with all our suppliers and others associated with the program, most sincerely on the way you have carried on. It is in the atmosphere of endeavour and constancy of purpose where I feel sure that the reward of success is achieved. Let's keep it that way therefore!!

Yours very truly,

Signed:—J. L. PLANT.

## ★ WANTED - - AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The recent issue of "The Machinist" told of how Al Hayes had asked the U.S. Govt. to assist in furthering apprenticeship plans in the U.S.A. He told of how some of the large A/C plants have "pirated" skilled help from other plants and have done nothing to increase the available supply of craftsmen. How true is this of our own employer?

On the positive side Avro used to have a school for the aircraft trades, but local supply long since overcame local demand and the school has been closed for quite a few years. The Company gives a few scholarships to those children of employees who show promise, but these are for scientific courses—there are none for the Arts. The Company has been known to pay part of the cost of technical courses some of our brothers have taken, and by a recent gesture has shown that management anyway heartily approve of the habit of lunchtime studies. Is this enough? From a purely commercial standpoint, it probably is. There is reputed to be two hundred mechanical engineers with degrees out of work in Toronto at the present time. There are many times that number of skilled craftsmen looking for work. However, Avro and N. America generally do not exist in a vacuum. The future will be seized by others if we do not grab our share. The Russians are producing 13,000

engineers a year. Many of these will be "exported" to the under-developed nations. The Chinese are planning similar moves. In Red China today, there is reported to be a tremendous hunger for education and the government is taking steps to satisfy it.

Meanwhile in the U.S.A. "egghead" is a term of contempt, and in Canada there is still to be found a lingering of the old 19th century "if everybody is educated, who will do the work?"

Let's face it, if we all get ourselves the best education and ensure the same for our children, we will all do the work. We may find that a lot of the effort that we used to put in was misdirected, like the toolmaker who learned logarithms as an afterthought and found he could do trigonometry in a third of his previous time. Some people complain that the "old head won't take it any more." Analysed, this statement is pure balderdash. The brain is probably the most immortal part of the body. Capacity to learn does not fall off in later life. Only the will to learn.

Industry, in co-operation with Labour and the Government, should undertake an aggressive apprenticeship and further educational programme. If this does not happen we may find—before many more years have passed that we are the peasants!