

# U-K Head Of Avro Sees PM

## BULLETIN

OTTAWA — Defense Production Minister O'Hurley conferred today with aircraft branch director D. L. Thompson and assistant director A. D. Belyea on the A. V. Roe proposal to enter the field of nuclear powered aircraft research. No announcement was expected after the meeting.

### By GERALD WARING Special To The Telegram

OTTAWA — A. V. Roe Canada Ltd. will assign some of its surplus engineers to the task of designing a nuclear-powered aircraft engine if the Federal Government will finance the project, it was learned here today.

Informed sources said this is the meaning of the reference Finance Minister Fleming made in the House of Commons last Friday to "nuclear power."

Mr. Fleming, outlining emergency government aid to Avro in the wake of cancellation of the CF-105 jet interceptor program, said Avro had proposed "various new programs" to absorb some of the highly skilled engineers and technicians laid off after the CF-105 cancellation.

The Finance Minister said the programs were "in the fields of military and civil aviation and nuclear power."

(Ron Williams, assistant to the president of A. V. Roe Canada Ltd., confirmed that Orenda engineers were working on nuclear development.

("For the last three years Orenda has had engineers working with the Government at Chalk River and at the Peterboro development plant," he said.

(He said the project was not connected specifically with a nuclear aircraft engine.

("We are interested in the commercial application of nuclear energy. There has been no suggestion as to what the application would be.")

Sir Roy Dobson, board chairman of A. V. Roe and head of the parent Hawker-Siddeley group of Great Britain, continued his talks with Government officials today.

Sir Roy arrived unheralded in the capital yesterday, met the Prime Minister, then conferred with Defense Minister Pearkes and twice with De-

fense Production Minister O'Hurley.

At his side was Toronto corporation lawyer J. S. D. Tory, who is an A. V. Roe vice-president.

It is understood the two are trying to heal the breach between the Government and the company which was opened in acrimony last week.

Informed sources here said Avro's proposal is that the Government finance a take-over by Avro of part of a design study for nuclear-powered aircraft which already is under way in Avro's parent organization, the British Hawker-Siddeley group.

The study program would then become a joint British-Canadian project, like the atomic bomb project early in World War II.

These sources said that even before the 105 crisis, some of Avro's technical experts had been thinking on this problem, including the design of a nuclear reactor to power an airplane.

Mr. Fleming said Friday that the various Avro proposals are being studied by the Government.

### NOT YET

It is understood that no decision on Government financing of the nuclear-power plan has yet been reached.

Government sources here are warmly sympathetic to the nuclear power proposal—more so than to another Avro suggestion that the Government help finance the company's re-entry into the field of com-

mercial jet aircraft design and production.

These sources expressed the opinion that the postwar Avro Jetliner could not be resuscitated as such; it would be necessary to design a new airplane and bring it into production, which might take five years.

And even then, they pointed out, Avro would probably need a captive market—represented by Trans-Canada Air Lines and the RCAF—because of the long lead of British and American companies in the commercial jet field.

### SMALL AUTO

Among numerous Avro suggestions put before the Government was one to turn Avro's surplus production space over to the manufacture of a small European-type automobile.

The Government is understood to have made it clear that while it would not put any obstacles in the way of such a project, it could not give it any financial support.

On the other hand, sources here pointed out, Avro's Orenda jet engine plant has great turbo-jet know-how.

The Government's atomic research centre at Chalk River has great nuclear reactor know-how.

A marriage of the two makes sense, it was stated, for a "simple" nuclear-powered aircraft engine is a conventional turbo-jet with the combustion chamber replaced by a small but very hot nuclear reactor.

Moreover, The Telegram sources said, this project would be a challenge to the nation's scientific and technical brains.

It is in the national interest, they asserted, to keep usefully employed in Canada as many as possible of the best brains which have worked on the CF-105 and the Iroquois jet engine.

The Russians are generally credited with being well ahead of the U.S. in the field of atomic propulsion.

On Jan. 1 they announced they would fly a nuclear-powered "civil" aircraft within a year, and Western experts are wary of ridiculing the Soviet claim.

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