

Editorial

NOT SO DIFFERENT

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones, the saying goes, but we can't help chuckling over the misfortune of a fellow purveyor of the printed word who unconsciously called attention in a public speech to the fact that when his paper reported McCurdy's flight at Baddeck fifty years ago, it got the date wrong. Charles H. Peters, president of the Canadian Press and of the Gazette Printing Co., was addressing the Aviation Writing Awards luncheon at Quebec City last fall on the subject of "Fifty Years of Aviation News". He kicked off his talk by quoting the first item on aviation carried by the Gazette in 1909. It was the report of the McCurdy flight. The dateline: February 24.

RETROFIT

We hear that those responsible for building the full-scale replica of McCurdy's Silver Dart were hard pressed to restrain RCAF engineers who were charged with ensuring the replica was airworthy for its commemorative flight on February 23. It seems that when the engineering people saw all that bamboo and wire and fabric, their minds began churning with ideas for mods that would "improve" it. Cracked one wit: "They wanted to turn it into a Harvard!"

LOOKING FOR THE SILVER LINING

In this year of the 50th anniversary of the first powered, man-carrying heavier-than-air flight in Canada, some are wryly saying that the celebration marks the beginning of the decline of Canada's aviation industry. Whether or not such remarks are intended seriously, we cannot say, but they are encountered with sufficient frequency to indicate that they may reflect a growing state of mind.

Without discounting the seriousness of the situation in which a very large segment of Canada's Aircraft Industry now finds itself, we would like to say that perhaps it would be good for the Industry's mental health if, for a change, it took a few cautiously optimistic looks at the future.

With those who insist on taking the pessimistic view, we must agree that for a matter of years, the outlook for the manufacturing industry may be very bleak indeed. But we cannot agree that termination of Arrow development *per se* will mean the end of the Industry.

The effects of the cancellation of the Arrow have been discussed in exhaustive detail in many media, around conference tables and in smoky rooms, so we will not go into them again here. We would like to say, however, that they bear an interesting resemblance to arguments that were made in 1946 when the mighty wartime industry almost vanished overnight.

It was not long after, in those blackest of days, that the A. V. Roe organization decided the time was auspicious to make a start in this country. Are we then to believe that this same organization — which initially could scrape together enough work to keep only 300 employees busy — is going to throw up its hands in final despair if the inconceivable comes to pass?

New Worlds to Conquer: Looking around us we see many reasons for optimism about the future of the Industry as a whole. In the research and development area, a growing amount of Canadian Government and U.S.-sponsored work is being done in this country on VTOL. With de Havilland Canada's home-developed products, Canada has already become a world leader in the STOL field. Why can't we aim to establish ourselves similarly in the VTOL field? Is our preoccupation with supersonics and hypersonics making us forget that it will be many a day before every excursion made into the air by man is with the intention of moving about at such speeds?

In the near future there are prospects of some imposing production contracts: Canadair still stands an excellent chance in its bid in connection with the U.S. picket plane requirement; the Air Division has to be re-equipped very soon and the RCAF has already pretty well decided that the Grumman Super Tiger is the bird it wants. Somebody will have to produce it.

We think that there will be a 100th anniversary of aviation in Canada . . . and the celebrations will be big.