

**editorial**

## Wanted: End to Speculation On the Avro Arrow Program

The House of Commons estimates committee has taken a hard look at Canada's defense expenditures and made a number of recommendations aimed at realizing economies and assuring full value for defense dollars.

One of the questions raised as a result of the committee's report to the House was the advisability of Canada's aviation industry continuing to undertake admittedly costly development of new equipment. Might it not be more economical to purchase the major items (such as aircraft) from the United States or Britain and concentrate Canadian development effort on less costly projects?

There is no evidence that first line equipment, while it is still first line equipment, is available at substantial savings in either the United States or Britain over the cost of producing weapons tailored to Canada's particular needs in our own country. On the contrary, experience with the Avro CF-100 and its Orenda power plants was that the Canadian-produced aircraft cost less than comparable U. S. and U. K. units. (Canadian Aviation, June, 1958.)

It should also be remembered that economy in the national context means more than dollars saved. It encompasses jobs and vigorous industries turning our natural resources into products to fill our own needs and earn dollars in foreign trade.

As has also been pointed out by others, the government cannot in conscience divorce decisions on procurement for defense (or other purposes for that matter) from considerations of the over-all effect on the national economy.

If the Canadian aviation industry were dragging its feet on development, or pro-

ducing only at prices grossly above those quoted by other sources, the procurement agency's course would be clear.

But this is not the case.

Modern defense equipment comes high, from any source. Once the decision to maintain modern defense forces has been made, economy lies in investing as much of the required expenditure as possible in our own industries as soon as possible.

The most dangerous *and expensive* aspect of the present situation is the government's apparent indecision over the Avro Arrow. We say apparent because those in the industry who should know say there is no indecision. They say that the procrastination of the last few months and talk of a decision "in the fall" is a lot of poppycock. They say it was decided beyond any shadow of doubt months ago that the Arrow would be placed in full production.

This is borne out by the "unofficial" reports from several major subcontractors who say they have had production orders in their pockets for some time — "But please don't quote us."

Up to the time of going to press, however, there had been no official announcement.

At present there is no other aircraft in the world that could take the place of the CF-105 *at any price*. Canada has a lead that no amount of dollars can replace. But months, even weeks, are vital in the maintenance of such a lead. Delays are costly in other respects also. For months many companies were working overtime to meet production dates on Arrow components, yet that effort is being sapped by a painful period of marking time.