

'Disaster' For Municipalities

A dozen municipalities and townships surrounding the huge Avro aircraft plant have been hard hit by Avro's layoff of 13,800 workers.

"We are losing our accumulation of technical brains and know-how to other countries," warned Reeve H. O. Waffle of Etobicoke.

More than 500 home-owners could be out in the streets warned the mayors of Acton, Georgetown and Milton.

"I'm astonished and shocked, said Mayor Carman Core of Brampton.

There was the same reaction in Port Credit, Streetsville, Bolton and Weston and in Chinguacousy, Albion and Toronto townships — all across Halton county. Throughout this area Avro workers are living, buying homes and spending their pay-cheques.

But in Toronto, not quite so close to the problem, Metro Chairman Fred Gardiner said last night Metro officials can only wait and see. "We just have to wait for clarification," he said.

Mr. Gardiner said: "Metro can't go into the aircraft building business and the province can't get into defence."

He observed: "The loss of this much money is obviously going to hurt."

Mr. Gardiner said he was sure both Mr. Diefenbaker's decision and the shut-down action by Avro were taken "reluctantly and after full study." He said he had no doubt the government "reluctantly came to the conclusion it couldn't handle the amount of money involved, and, as well, had regard to the changes in defence thinking."

Reeve Waffle pointed out that on a long-range basis, the fact that close to 14,000 people are out of jobs is a secondary concern. "Our biggest danger at the moment is that we are losing our accumulation of technical brains and know-how to some other countries," he warned.

"These people, the key personnel, won't stick around long

with no demand for their services. They will leave and we won't get them back again," he said. "I have no brief for the Arrow essentially. I'm thinking of our own ability to set up and keep up our own national defence."

Reeve Waffle said even if the government has some alternate program in mind, it will take a long time to design, prove, and then retool for production.

Reeve J. C. Saddington, of Port Credit, said he can't visualize the pool of trained men at Malton just being dispersed. "There must be some manner in which they can be employed in their particular skills," he said.

Mr. Saddington is also chairman of the finance committee of Peel county council, and "speaking from the county level, I hope this situation won't confront us with a lot of welfare problems," he said. "The lay-off has come right in the middle of a cold, hard winter."

Mayor Core said Brampton has 1,169 aircraft workers with weekly pay of \$93,520.

"This has been a black day. More than half the people phoning me about the lay-off were asking how they could go about getting visas to go to the U.S. to work," he said.

Mayors Walter Cook of Acton, John Armstrong of Georgetown and Sidney Childs of Milton said at least one-quarter of their towns' population will be affected by the layoffs. Acton's population is 4,000, Georgetown's is 9,000 and Milton's is 5,000.

Mayor Cook, himself a government inspector at Orenda, said 90 per cent. of the home-owners in Acton's two new subdivisions could lose their homes if the layoff is prolonged. "It will depend on what Central Mortgage and Housing does. If they clamp down, it could be disastrous."

"Get By Somehow"

Mayor Cook said he knew of four families on his own street alone where both the husband and wife work for Avro. He said that although the picture looked bleak, he hoped the

town would "get by . . . somehow. There'll have to be considerable municipal belt-tightening . . . we'll have to have second thoughts about a new 10-room public school we were going to build . . . we've invested \$250,000 in sewers and watermains in Glenlea and Lakeview subdivisions on a local-improvement basis. Most of the wage-earners in these two subdivisions work at Avro . . . I don't know what will happen."

Mayor John Armstrong, of Georgetown, said: "I can't believe the government will allow these plants to close down completely. I think the government owes it to us to say whether there'll be an alternate program."

He said the town, at the

moment, could afford some financial assistance for laid-off workers, but "I wouldn't like to hazard a guess at what the picture will be like come Spring."

Reeve Mary Fix of Toronto township, where 1,124 aircraft workers have been bringing home \$114,000 weekly, said that Avro officials, "with their world-wide connections, should be able to do something to keep their Malton plant operating."

DAILY TELEGRAM