

SATURDAY NIGHT FEBRUARY 3, 1962

The Dodo and the Canada Goose

TAKING THE DODO as his symbol Ron Boorne, a professor in the engineering faculty of Mount Allison University, created a lively, uncomfortable and politically explosive TV play on the CBC *Festival* series two weeks ago.

The action took place in an aircraft factory in Central Canada — a factory devoted to building the White Knight, the newest and best military aircraft in the world.

The strain of building it, of working long hours into the night, of always being under strict security regulations, of deeply mistrusting the politicians who would eventually buy it or kill it so chewed into the personnel that their public struggle often wrecked their private lives. And it was the various reactions of the characters under this tension which made the play so memorable.

But though it was produced as a play dealing, as all good drama should, with the interaction of strong characters in a difficult situation, nothing that the CBC has ever carried on its network has been such an indictment of Canada's actual posture in the world in these past few years.

In the first place, there was the disposition of the White Knight itself. After all the money, effort and human emotion which had been poured into it had put it successfully into the air, the Government decided against using it. It would be cheaper, said Ottawa, in terms of mere Defence Department invoicing, to buy a foreign product.

Just as the real Arrow was killed by the real Government so was the fictional White Knight. And there must have been a sharp national wince as viewers saw *this* equipment being brutally cut up or merely smashed. (The public were not allowed to see this happening at the Avro plant. Photographers were not welcome in Malton to document the death of the real thing.)

Then there was the disposition of the staff. Expert designers, draftsmen and management people all (except for the most sluggish and unproductive) went off to the United States to work on the planes and missiles which the Government who had thus turned them out of a job in this country, would later buy. Even the idealists who cared about

Canada as much as they cared about aircraft had to go.

What chance would they ever have here again? With the wings clipped from the White Knight, any flying to be done would have to be done by somebody else for us. The idealist

Columbus Debunked

"The Chinese Communists . . . now submit that the Chinese were the first to discover America . . . (This) Peking contends, is effective proof of the 1500 years of friendship between the peoples of China and America which . . . cannot be undermined by provocation."—Hedley Rhodes, from London Observer Service.

ABOUT A THOUSAND years ago
(History textbooks have it so)
American shores were visited
By a valiant Viking, Leif, son of Red;
But both captain and crew were unaware
They were not the first to winter there.
Peking: They were five long centuries late,
And the son of the Red was out of date.

In 1492
Columbus sailed the ocean blue,
And it never once entered the Admiral's head
This all had been done by the son of the Red.
And it never occurred to the Admiral's bean
Chinese were first on the New World scene:
So Leif was far from a superman
And Columbus merely an also-ran.

Nothing you say and nothing you hear
Has any effect on our friendship dear.
So bear it in mind and remember, please,
Say nothing unkind of the good Chinese:
If we think that our land is passing fair,
It's thanks to Peking, we are well aware—
We're here due to enterprise oriental:
The mess we are in is occidental.

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could even persuade himself that by going to the United States and helping to produce a good plane there he was doing his best for Canada whose government was much too concerned about comforting the voters to spend money to protect them — that they would leave to the United States.

Which led to the final thrust. Stripped of its ability to fly, stripped of the people who could ever make it fly, Canada slipped back onto the ground and got on with doing what it has always done: digging materials out of the ground for other people to use; producing trained men for other nations to buy; settling down into a comfortable rut which, since it is a rut so abundantly filled with natural and human resources, other people will protect from predators.

Said Paul Archambault, a French-Canadian character in this excellent play:

Rodd: You know what this country reminds me of? It's like a . . .

Paul: A dodo.

Rodd: A what?

Paul: A dodo. A species of bird, you know; now extinct . . . with a big fat body and little wings. It couldn't fly.

Rodd: I don't see . . .

Paul: (cutting in) Oh maybe it could get off the ground a little bit. Maybe some bright morning when everything was just right the dodo said to himself "I'm going to fly today." Can't you see him, flapping his little wings? Trying to get off — trying — trying — oh, but he just couldn't make it. So he sat down at the end of the runway and had a bite to eat. There was plenty of food lying around, so he didn't have to worry, even if he couldn't fly.

And in the days following this telecast, as one read of the agreement on agricultural policy between the European Common Market countries, of President Kennedy's projected trade deal with Europe; as one listened to Trade Minister George Hees telling the Furniture Mart how Canadian businessmen had failed to support him in his drive for more exports into new markets, one wondered how much more accurate the dodo looked as a national symbol than the Canada goose.

Mr. Diefenbaker, who might well have taken public umbrage at the show, said not a word. He doubtless knew that if he had said anything, the country might well have replied, on behalf of the CBC, "If the cap fits, wear it." And who ever heard of a Prime Minister going to the country wearing a dodo?