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NOTE TO FILE

CBC Programme on the Avro Arrow

1. Early in 1980 the CBC aired a programme on the Avro Arrow. During research the producer requested access which could not be given into DND files concerning the Arrow. The Deputy Minister did, however, answer some specific questions about the order for destroying the aircraft prototype. This correspondence is to be found on file number 2125-4 TD 8285.
2. The programme itself turned out to be a moderate and relatively accurate interpretation of events. The following observations were made by the Director at the time of the programme.
3. The reason for cancelling the Avro jet liner was not convincing, nor could it be supported by documentation. This is a subject that requires proper historical analysis.
4. The rank of LtGen "Reggie" Lane was consistently given as Brig Gen.
5. The programme argues that it is not known who ordered the destruction of the prototype. In fact the Deputy Minister explained in his letter to the producer that the order for destruction stemmed from advice given by the Chief of Air Staff, the Deputy Minister of National Defence and the Department of Defence Production.
6. The programme left the impression that no opportunity had been given for various agencies to acquire the prototype. As the Deputy Minister's letter pointed out, this is not true.
7. The programme was interesting in that it left the viewer with the feeling that Mr. Crawford Gordon's personality clash with Mr. Diefenbaker was instrumental in bringing about cancellation of the Arrow. This impression could even be interpreted to suggest that Mr. Gordon himself might have ordered the destruction of films and blueprints relating to the Arrow. It must be emphasized that there is no evidence of such actions.
8. The programme concluded that no American interests were involved in the decision. On the face of it this seems a remarkably innocent point of view. Previous accounts have suggested with some reason that the American aviation industry would not have been comfortable with the Arrow as competition and therefore was not likely to give the Canadian firm much opportunity to compete.

W.A.B. Douglas
Ottawa, 21 April 1980

As reproduced in Arrow Scrapbook

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