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AVRO ARROW**Words****Jim Floyd recollects Black Friday**

June 28, 1999

I don't think the general public cared. The people in the aviation industry cared a hell of a lot, and certainly the people who were out of jobs and losing their homes and couldn't sell them because everybody else was trying to sell theirs and move to America or England or somewhere. It was a total disaster for the people concerned, the 30,000 people including subcontractors and so on. But I don't think the general public minded at that time. It's now they mind, when they see what could have been, and what wasn't.

After the cancellation, I first of all went out to the West Coast to try and find jobs for my people because I had 150 very qualified engineers and I had 1500 other draftsman and engineers in the design office. I went out ... and talked to a number of companies like Boeing and Lockheed so we could place teams of our people there and get them back again when sense broke out and we got back into business at Avro, which of course we never did.

Yes there was (a compensation package) but that came later. After the deed it was then agreed with a lot of negotiations ... with Smye who went to Ottawa and got some sort of a deal that there would be seniority payments for union people. But by that time I was in England and busy as all hell working on supersonic transport.

That's what Crawford said [it was necessary to fire everybody]. I think the message [from the government] was, 'Your contracts are cancelled, and no further contracts are available'... I think that both Smye, who really ran the company, and Gordon, decided that how could you keep the company going, so they decided to cancel everything on the day.

I went to see Fred Smye when he was in Portugal, and asked him the same question [Was it necessary to fire everybody?] He said, 'What the hell do you do when you're told that there's no work, that the projects you're doing were cancelled as of that day, and there won't be any work or compensation. What do you do?'

-- From a conversation with Jim Floyd (1999)

Story by:

