

The Sped Arrow Feb 28, 1959

An Editorial in The Times, London

Whoever may be at fault, there can be nothing but sympathy for the 14,000 men, half of them recent migrants from the United Kingdom, who have been thrown upon the Canadian labor market, at a time of severe unemployment, by the decision not to proceed with the manufacture of the Avro Arrow CF-105 jet interceptor aircraft. The Government and the Avro company are now heatedly trying to throw the blame upon one another.

On the face of it, the company has the better case. No exception can be taken to the Government's decision itself. In the judgment of Canadian strategists and their United States partners in the defense of their continent, the production of a new Canadian manned interceptor is superfluous. It would be a dangerous waste of the country's resources to continue the manufacture of an expensive weapon whose future utility is so doubtful. But if the Government is right in cutting short the project without further ado, it cannot also complain because the company gives equally short notice to its servants.

The three weeks "separation pay" that Mr. Diefenbaker points out has been guaranteed to the company is a negligible palliative. The shortness of the notice has been exaggerated by both parties to the controversy. It has been known for six months that the Arrow would probably have to be dropped; what the friends of Canada would like to see is more

evidence than has yet appeared that the Government and the company have spent the interval in fruitful consultation on the best means of lessening the impact of the impending blow—and it is from the Government that the initiative should be expected.

The remoter consequences may be grave. The resources of Canada are hard pressed to meet the heavy financial demands of the two potentially competitive systems of strategy and foreign policy to which Canada is committed—the defense of the North American continent and the discharge of her wider responsibilities in NATO. The predominance of the Fortress America concept would tend to draw Canada into strategic and eventually political subordination to her more populous and powerful ally to the south.

The Avro establishment is the great enterprise through which Canada has endeavored to vindicate her equal authority in the alliance by manufacturing one of the principal instruments of the joint defense on her own soil. Henceforth, it appears, the place of the manned interceptor is to be taken by the Bomarc guided missile, which is made by the Boeing company in the United States. A big shift southward of the centre of gravity of the defense system is threatened. It would seem equally probable that the skilled craftsmen displaced from Avro must seek their future over the American border.