

# 4,500 Ask Job Action For Avro

By WILFRED LIST

A rally of 4,500 jobless Avro workers yesterday cheered and applauded demands that the Federal Government breathe life back into Avro and Orenda, virtually snuffed out by the cancellation of the Arrow program.

The meeting, sponsored by the four aircraft lodges of the International Association of Machinists, urged the Government to call a top-level confer-

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ence of labor, management and Government representatives to plan alternative employment for the 13,800 Avro workers.

It was the first chance the Avro employees had collectively to let off steam since the Black Friday when they were suddenly told they no longer had jobs. And they didn't let an opportunity pass.

The CNE Coliseum echoed time and again to cheers, whistles and applause as a succession of speakers denounced the Government at Ottawa for what was described as its heartless and irresponsible action in abruptly ending the Arrow project.

But despite the bitterness and anger reflected in the platform speeches, the meeting itself was marked by a good humor on the part of the workers who filled the Coliseum to two-thirds of its capacity.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker's effort to lay the blame for the plight of the Avro workers on the company that employed them was met with scorn and anger on the part of IAM officers who addressed the meeting.

Although union representa-

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tives Peter Podger and James McQueen refused to enter the argument between the Government and Avro over responsibility for the mass dismissals, most of the criticism was directed at the Government.

Nor would the union officials concede that the Government had acted wisely in abandoning the manned interceptor as a key weapon in this country's system of defense.

The mass meeting drew a coterie of Liberal politicians, led by Ontario Liberal Leader Wintermeyer. Mr. Wintermeyer asked for and was granted the opportunity to speak—but overstepped, as the chairman noted, the five minutes allotted to him. In tow behind Mr. Wintermeyer were a number of provincial Liberal candidates.

Ontario CCF Leader MacDonald, a platform guest, was described by meeting chairman Harry Graham of the IAM Malton lodges as a long-standing friend of labor. Mr. MacDonald drew repeated applause as he directed a shotgun attack at Federal and Ontario Conservative parties for their role in the Avro crisis.

Apart from the general demand for immediate action by the Government, two suggestions were pinpointed as short-term answers to the problem of keeping the Avro aeronautical team together.

Mr. Podger, along with other speakers, said resumption of work on eight unfinished Arrows would provide jobs during a transition from the interceptor program to another type of undertaking.

He also suggested continuance of the Iroquois engine program at Orenda. Mr. Podger described its abandonment as short-sighted and unrealistic. There was no reason why this advanced engine could not be sold to other countries for adaptation to either military or commercial use, he said.

The two-hour meeting heard speeches of support from William Jenoves on behalf of the Canadian Labor Congress, of which he is a vice-president; George Schollie, IAM Canadian vice-president; Larry Sheffe, president of the United Auto Workers local at de Havilland Aircraft; Dennis McDermott, UAW international representative and member of the joint IAM-UAW Aircraft Stabilization Committee; and Doug Hamilton, secretary-treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labor.

The meeting adopted a lengthy resolution, which condemned the Government for "its ineptitude."

It heaped scorn on the difference between the Government and Avro over whether the company should have been prepared for the outright cancellation of the program.

"This confusion," said the resolution, "must rank as an outstanding achievement in the light of highly developed communication systems at the disposal of both parties today."

The resolution described efforts to find jobs for the Avro employees as "fumbling and unco-ordinated."

It added: If the Government had the slightest sense of social

responsibility it would have made provision to meet the situation which it must have known would accrue from the Arrow cancellation. By its abrupt and heartless action it has demonstrated a complete lack of this responsibility."

The resolution, reflecting the difficulty many Avro employees have experienced in finding jobs because of age, urged immediate enactment of federal legislation to ban age discrimination in job hiring.

The meeting also asked the Canadian Labor Congress and the Ontario Federation of Labor to call a meeting of all affiliates to consider the record unemployment against the background of the Malton situation.

Mr. Podger reported on the two-hour meeting he and other union representatives had with Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Wednesday. The prime minister, he said, spent some time defending the Government's decision and attacking Avro for what Mr. Diefenbaker described as callous action in laying off its employees.

"The thing that struck us most," said Mr. Podger, "is that while Avro workers are out in the cold, the politicians and company officials argue over who is responsible."

"We don't care who is to blame; we say they should stop arguing and put the employees back to work," he said.

Mr. Schollie said the Arrow controversy was marked by a mass of contradictory statements on the part of all concerned. As late as last July there had been a decision that the manned interceptor was necessary to North American defense, he said, but two months later the prime minister intimated the Arrow would be scrapped; and this was followed by company assurance that regardless of the Government's decision, its employees would be required until the end of March, at least.

Referring to the breakup of the Avro team, Mr. Schollie said if hostilities started it would be difficult to bring the aeronautical group together after it had been dispersed.

"If we are going to need manned interceptors, as I am sure we will, are we going to buy them from the United States?" he asked.

There was a roar of "No! No!" from the members.

The OFL secretary, Mr. Hamilton, was greeted with applause as he accused the Diefenbaker Government of bringing the country closer to U.S. domination than ever before.

The union members, who sat attentively through most of the speeches, applauded again when he said that despite Mr. Diefenbaker's campaign promises that no one would suffer because of unemployment, there are now 785,100 Canadians drawing unemployment insurance.

"Surely it is time that the Federal Government faced up to this serious problem and what better place to start than at Malton?" he asked.

"I want to make it clear," Mr. Hamilton continued, "that the unemployed are not interested in handouts or charity or staying on unemployment insurance

rolls. They want jobs at rates of pay that will enable them to provide for their families."

Mr. Jenoves, CLC vice-president, said the Government had not given much consideration to the state of the economy in dumping an additional 13,000 persons on the overloaded unemployment rolls.

No business concern would bring its operations to a sudden halt without some substitute project, he added.

Mr. Jenoves said the Government was attempting to justify its action on the basis of its September statement in which it said the Arrow program was to be reviewed.

"I don't think anyone took that too seriously because we thought the unemployment situation was far too serious for the Government to aggravate it," Mr. Jenoves stated.

He said he hoped Premier Frost's promise to work out a plan to put the Avro facilities back into use had some substance behind it.

CCF Leader MacDonald accused both Prime Minister Diefenbaker and Premier Frost of paying lip service to labor's demand for a program to save the jobs of Avro employees.

The action was not only belated but was designed to save the Conservative Party from the political storm set off by Mr. Diefenbaker's blunder, he said.

If Ottawa was really serious about an alternative program it would have worked it out before announcing cancellation of the Arrow, he said.

Mr. MacDonald took a swipe at Labor Minister Starr for his statements that Avro workers would find jobs elsewhere.

Mr. Starr's name brought a scattering of boos from the audience.

"Why is Mr. Starr talking about jobs elsewhere if the Government were intent on keeping the aircraft industry together?" "Have you got them yet?" There were shouts of "no!"

Mr. MacDonald also took a cut at Premier Frost, whose Government, he said, could do little about the basic problem of re-establishing an industry which falls under federal jurisdiction.

"There's no point misleading the public with false hopes," he said.

Premier Frost had done nothing to assist the municipalities involved or the workers faced with continuing mortgage and other payments, he added. The premier had said nothing about arranging a moratorium on those payments.

There was a roar of applause as Mr. MacDonald said "the greatest role which Mr. Frost can play in this connection is to give leadership to the resounding protests and indignation of all the people of Ontario and lead a delegation to Ottawa to storm the bastions to force the Conservative Government there to change its irresponsible attitude."

Mr. Sheffe, who greeted the audience as guests and victims of John Diefenbaker, said the only contribution Labor Minister Starr had made with regard to unemployment dealt with the Do It Now program.

"The only one who took advantage of it was Mr. Diefenbaker, and he did it Friday morning," he said.

Liberal Leader Wintermeyer said he had come to the meeting voluntarily because the Avro plight represented a crisis in Canadian history. It was not his intention to use the meeting as a political forum, he said.

Canada must make up its mind now whether it will support an aircraft industry, Mr. Wintermeyer said.

Mr. McDermott stated the prime minister's statement announcing the end of the Arrow smacked of arrogance and a complete disregard of the Canadian workers.

The UAW representative said the Toronto area MPs, who had agreed earlier with the union views on the Arrow program, sat like little lambs when Mr. Diefenbaker scuttled it.

Mr. McDermott criticized the prime minister's attack last month against those lobbying for continuance of the Arrow project.

"He cut his eye teeth on lobbies as a Tory politician, but he objected to ours because it was a trade union one," he added. "But he has to face the largest, noisiest lobby of all—the Canadian people."

"Unless something positive is done soon, we will never, never, never vote Tory again," he added, amid prolonged applause.

"And a good place to start is right here in Ontario," he said.

Mr. McDermott said Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Labor Minister Starr and John Pallett, Conservative member for Peel had been invited to the meeting. There had been no reply from the prime minister, and Mr. Starr and Mr. Pallett said they could not attend, he added.

About 100 former employees of the Orenda Engines Ltd. test establishment at Nobel, seven miles north of Parry Sound, attended the rally. The Nobel workers filled 17 cars, but arrived a few minutes too late to join the cavalcade from Malton to the CNE grounds.

Two babies and about 200 women were in the audience. Year-old Robbie Robinson slipped out at the half-way mark, in his mother's arms, to have a bottle of milk. His father, William Robinson, was an Avro structural assembly worker until laid off.

Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Scade had their daughter Hazel, 9 months, with them at the meeting. Mr. Scade also was an Avro assembly worker.

Another youthful spectator was Jeffrey Canyu, 2, one of the three sons of Mr. and Mrs. John Canyu.

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