

Backed Arrow

Mr. Howe Regrets Jet Fate

The man who promoted the Arrow program in the St. Laurent government said yesterday he was sorry to see it abandoned.

C. D. Howe, former defense production minister, emerging from a directors' meeting at Bay Street offices of Rio Tinto Mining Co. of Canada, commented:

"I am sorry to see a program abandoned that interested me very much," he said.

He said the costs of the program were a terrible load and the present Government must have decided the costs were too great.

"The cost of the Arrow certainly astonished me," said Mr. Howe.

The former production minister, who now calls himself a private citizen with private interests, defended the initial decision to proceed with the Arrow, a decision reached after the joint chiefs of staff convinced Mr. Howe the controversial plane was vital to the country's defense.

"It seemed like the right thing to do at the time," he said. "We were convinced the plane would be needed for at least 10 years."

However, he admitted yesterday, the rapid development of electronics and guided missiles, overtook the Arrow.