

The Beginning—and End: II

The Diefenbaker Government's decision to end the Arrow aircraft and Iroquois engine development program—without having anything to put in its place—reveals a major, and widely spread, internal weakness of that Government; a failure, not just in one but in several of its departments, to look ~~and~~ to plan ahead. This weakness has been apparent since the Government assumed office 20 months ago; but never, in that time, has it been so dramatically disclosed.

Quite obviously, there has been grave short-sightedness in the Defense Department, the Defense Production Department and the Chiefs of Staff. Our own reporter, Mr. Harold Greer, drew attention to this in a series of articles which appeared in *The Globe and Mail* just two weeks ago. He pointed to "the blight of indecision"—indecision at the Federal Government level—which was obstructing and discouraging Canada's aircraft industry. And he clearly spelled out the reason for this blight:

"There is nowhere for the industry to go to express its views on national policy. There is no department of government, nor any interdepartmental board or committee, responsible for recommending to the Cabinet that it is in Canada's interest to produce this or that aircraft."

But the weakness, the lack of any clear-cut national policy looking toward the future, is not confined to aircraft procurement; nor is it confined to the Defense and Defense Production Departments. With the forming of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and more especially with the integration of North American defense, it became increasingly plain that there would have to be a large-scale sharing of defense production in general between Canada and the United States.

It was the task of the External Affairs Department and the Department of Trade and Commerce to secure U.S. agreement to such sharing in the form of specific, deliberate promises. Thus equipped, the Diefenbaker Government could have ended the Arrow program (a decision with which this newspaper does not quarrel), and given the Arrow establishment of technicians and engineers something else to produce instead.

But it has ended the Arrow program without such promises, without such alternative production for the Arrow establishment—which must now, in consequence, be dissolved. This in turn means that the United States can tell us, as it told us ten years ago, that we haven't got the "know-how" for highly advanced defense production.

True enough, Prime Minister Diefenbaker assures us that there will be "greater opportunities" than in the past for Canadian industry to participate in the production of military equipment for North American defense. But we have been getting such promises for many years—without anything acceptable in the way of fulfilment. Now, it would seem, the situation is going to become even worse; not merely will our defense plants fail to get U.S. orders, but they will shut down completely, with U.S. plants taking over their job of supplying Canadian requirements.

This (as his political opponents are already noting) is the exact opposite of what Mr. Diefenbaker pledged in his 1958 election campaign—a greater development of a more independent Canada by, and for, Canadians. How has the Prime Minister been brought to such a humiliating position? By the bad planning and bad advice of people around him.

To a lesser extent, he was harried by economic pressures. Discontinuance of the Arrow program gives a modicum of relief to Finance Minister Fleming. But that relief will be short-lived if we are going into the enormously costly business of missile and nuclear defense. We can let the United States defend us along these lines, of course, but then we will have totally surrendered our sovereignty. Alternatively, we can buy such weapons from the United States, but what would this do to the Prime Minister's insistence, last Friday, that Canada should get the fullest value for its defense spending?

No, only one thing will do—a genuine sharing of defense production, at the highest levels of which Canadian brains and industry are capable. The Government would be wise to go no further, not one step further, in defense co-operation—either NATO or NORAD—with the United States until that point is definitely settled and understood. Our risk, as this newspaper has said, is no greater than theirs. And the way things are going now, we stand to lose our economic independence, our political independence, without the Communists so much as striking a blow.