

Air Marshal Favored Arrow, Can't Comment

Air Marshal C. Roy Slemon, Canada's top defense authority and second-in-command of the North American air defense system, said last night from his home in Colorado Springs that he would be unable to comment on the Federal Government's decision to scrap the Arrow.

The air marshal, who last November revealed at NORAD headquarters that he believed the Arrow was indispensable to this continent's defense said:

"I have just returned this evening from an out-of-town trip and have not heard any of the details of the decision. But both branches of the NORAD system (referring to the RCAF and the USAF) are completely responsive to any decisions made by our two governments.

"Regardless of what the actual decision is—and it certainly must be a proper one—I will be unable to comment on it."

The air marshal said there were no immediate alternative sources for manned interceptors for NORAD.

Both he and Gen. Earle T. Partridge, USAF, commander of NORAD, have stated emphatically that manned interceptors are a vital facet of defense planning and would be for some years to come.

At the time of Air Marshal Slemon's statements in favor of the Arrow, NORAD experts said there were manned interceptors either ready or in development stages in the United States, but the air marshal stated several reasons why he considered the Arrow preferable to any other aircraft available now, or in the next few years.