

Labour Crisis in Aircraft Industry

I am not condemning the Liberal government for what it did in laying the foundation of the CF-105. It did so on the basis of the information that it had at that time. It had no realization, nor did mankind anywhere in the free world, of the vast potentialities in nuclear weapons. Indeed, only last evening I was reading Kissinger on "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy". He pointed out this fact, that as late as 1947 Admiral Chester Nimitz said, "There will be no ICBM's in my lifetime." At the same time it was stated that if there were any continental missiles at all or any long distance missiles they would not within the lifetime of man—this was the viewpoint of the navy of that day—go beyond the distance of a thousand miles.

I am not condemning the last government for its stand. We may disagree on many things. In the large field of the maintenance of our security and freedom there is much range for disagreement as to the means taken, but no disagreement as to the objective. Who was the man who, above everyone else, had a viewpoint with regard to the CF-105? That man was the Right Hon. C. D. Howe, to whom the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) has referred in the most eulogistic terms on more than one occasion. What did Mr. Howe say the other day in Toronto? I quote from the *Globe and Mail* of February 21:

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 production minister, emerging from a directors' meeting at Bay street offices of Rio Tinto Mining Company 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—

I emphasize these words.

—convinced Mr. Howe the controversial plane was vital to the country's defence.

He went on to say:

"It seemed like the right thing to do at the time. We were convinced the plane would be needed for at least ten years." However, he admitted yesterday, that rapid development of electronics and guided missiles overtook the Arrow.

Now, sir, there is the viewpoint of the man who actually brought it into being, who was convinced by the chiefs of staff that it was the proper course to follow. He is a private citizen today, and I emphasize again that the statement he made was that "the rapid development of electronics and guided missiles overtook the Arrow".

There is another thing I have been impressed with today, the degree to which one person in this country has been entirely forgotten. Continue the expenditure, they say. Why was it stopped? Well, sir, it was stopped for the reason that the chiefs of staff, who advise in their wisdom and on the basis of the best information they can secure, determined that it did not make sense to expend the amount in question on behalf of this phase of defence, having regard to the developments of missiles and the like in the last few years.

One of the most interesting things I have deduced from what was said today is this. Regardless of the advice of the chiefs of staff and their general view that this aircraft would to all intents be obsolete by the time it became available for squadron service, apparently those sitting opposite would have the government squander nearly \$800 million of the taxpayers money, not to secure adequate defence but simply to carry on a project that in the light of events, whatever the justification at the beginning or subsequent decisions made, was presumed and intended to be reviewed at the end of each six months or one year.

I start with this. Do not tell me that it was an easy decision for the government to make. Do not tell me that we did not have full realization that in taking this step there would be many who would condemn. Governments have responsibilities. Governments must carry them out regardless of the immediate popular reaction. Governments have a responsibility to do that which they believe to be right on the basis of the best information they have available, that information weighed in the light of the experience of each of the individuals making up that government and having regard to all the circumstances. I say, that as long as I am in this position, whatever the consequences may be, if a decision requires to be made that may not have a popular reaction at the moment, if that is the right course to take then it must be taken by any government with a sense of responsibility.

I intend to trace in general the events of the last few years. I mentioned the technological changes that have taken place. I mentioned as well that other viewpoints were expressed. Only today I noted in a newspaper published last Saturday a reference to the fact that one former member of the house took a strong stand some years ago. I refer to the former leader of the C.C.F. in this house. Several years ago he said that the Arrow would be obsolescent before it was operational. However, that was not the view of the government of the day. No one is