

# Premier Drew Protests Contract Given Vickers Was Promised Malton

The Dominion Government's announcement that the Vickers plant at Montreal would be used for the manufacture of an all-Canadian plane to be used by Trans-Canada Air Lines was denounced in the Legislature yesterday by Premier George Drew, who asserted that last June Munitions Minister Howe had pledged that production of this type of plane would be carried on at Victory Aircraft, Malton.

In a 20-minute address which wound up the Budget debate, the Premier charged that H. J. Symington, president of T.C.A., was associated with Royal Securities Corp. of Montreal, which was heavily interested in the financing of Canadian Vickers; that the Vickers company no longer was controlled by Canadians, Britishers or United States citizens, and that 9,000 skilled men and women employed at Malton, as well as many other thousands engaged on subcontract work, would be lost to this particular type of aircraft construction.

The Lancaster plane now being made at Malton held every transatlantic speed record, and by reason of the fact that there were two convertible types, both of which could be turned out quickly, it was particularly adaptable for civil transport requirements, the Premier said.

## In "Teething Stage."

Many months and many millions of dollars would have to be spent at the Vickers plant, which was only in the "teething stage" as far as this type of aircraft was concerned, the Premier declared. This was the most important decision in the history of aircraft production in Canada, because the company called on to make the machine would become the backbone of the aircraft industry in the Dominion, he declared.

"We have a right to protest this change, this rather strange decision," the Premier declared. "All the more so when it is pointed out that this company, by a recent deal, passed out of the control of those who organized it and is now not controlled by Canadians, Britishers or United States citizens."

(The Premier declined to give details of the new ownership when approached on this point later.)

"Mr. H. J. Symington is president of Trans-Canada Airlines," continued the Premier. "It is interesting that in the same newspaper

which reported Mr. Howe as saying that the Douglas plane would be made at the Vickers plant Mr. Symington is also quoted in connection with his appearance before the Railway Committee in Ottawa. When we consider that the change is so important to so many workers in Ontario, it is important to know that Mr. Symington is personally associated with the Royal Securities Corporation of Montreal, which was heavily interested in the financing of Canadian Vickers Ltd.

"Another feature that will bear fuller disclosure is that the Vickers company which is to be given this

most important contract is not now controlled by people who are citizens of Canada, the British Empire or of the United States," the Premier declared. "These are important facts which affect the backbone of the heavy aircraft industry in this country."

Last June Mr. Howe said that an all-Canadian transport plane for T.C.A. would be produced at the Malton plant. While Mr. Howe had not said so in as many words, his announcement concerning Vickers meant that the Government had abandoned the intention to use Victory plant at Malton, the Premier continued. Not only the 9,000 highly skilled men and women at Malton were affected, but many thousands engaged in subcontracts and work on standard parts, he said.

"We on this side of the House hold no brief for anything connected with private ownership which is open to condemnation as not being in the public interest," said Mr. Drew. "I have not been sparing in my criticism. But here we have something which makes one wonder what is behind it. A great deal has been said about the wonderful thing to be done at Malton. Now the plane of the future is to be made at Vickers. That means that as soon as the contract for army Lancasters is finished, those highly skilled men and women at Malton will be lost to this particular type of work because the Victory plant is the only one making heavy four-engined bombers.

## Compares Machines.

"I am raising these remarks in the hope of stopping the change," the Premier told the House. "What is the reason? Is it that the DC-4 is a faster machine than the Lancaster? No. The Lancaster made at Malton hold the Atlantic speed records, going both ways. It is faster than the DC-4. Is it on the ground that the Lancaster is only a military machine? The company which designed the Lancaster has two convertible types. Both of them can be turned out very quickly because the parts are the same.

"If the Government commits itself to this obligation, the company gets the benefit, but the Government is the one responsible for the operation," the Premier declared. "We should raise a vigorous protest against this change in plans."

## Howe Would Swap Programs.

Ottawa, March 28 (Staff).—Munitions Minister Howe wasn't promising anything definite, but he offered to switch the Lancaster program at Victory Aircraft, Malton, with the Douglas D.C.-4 at Vickers in Montreal—that is if Ontario Premier Drew insisted.

Mr. Howe made the offer of a swap, "if perhaps it can be arranged," in comment on the Premier's statement today in the Legislature that he had reversed a decision to make the T.C.A. transport plane of the future at Malton.

"The Lancaster contract is many times the size of the one at Vickers,

of course. In fact, it is the biggest contract in money ever taken in this country on planes, and we will be going on building them for a long time yet. On the other hand, we are making only a few Douglases, just enough for the requirements of Canada's civil aviation. We naturally couldn't put the Douglas in Victory because it is fully engaged on bombers. Furthermore, they are entirely different one is for military purposes and the other for civilian," said Mr. Howe.

"As to his claims about the financing of Vickers, the Vickers plant is owned by the Government of Canada and is operated by Vickers on a management fee basis. So Mr. Drew is all wet—as usual."

Vickers has been fully engaged on PB-Y flying boats. But, according to the department, as the flying boat program has petered off, it plans to take up the slack in some degree with work on the Douglas.

## "Unintelligible."

Commenting on Mr. Howe's statement, Premier Drew said last night:

"Mr. Howe's statement is utterly unintelligible. What I pointed out was that after going through the expensive experimental stages, Victory Aircraft is now a highly efficient plant producing the only heavy four-engine land planes made in Canada.

"The English designers have provided the designs for commercial aircraft of the highest type by merely changing the present body structure. The 9,000 skilled workers at Malton and the many thousands in other parts of Ontario making parts are not all on a producing basis, and the moment the war demand for Lancasters comes to an end they can immediately swing into large-scale production of commercial aircraft. By every reasonable expectation they could be producing the very finest commercial aircraft of the type needed much sooner than would be possible in the Vickers plant.

"In view of Mr. Howe's statement that the D.C.-4's are to be our transport machines, it is also important to know if the company responsible for the fulfilment of the contract of such great importance to Canada is or is not controlled by Canadians.

"It is likely too that the contract for Lancasters is larger than the contract for D.C.-4's. That is the very reason that the commercial machine should be made here, because the size of the Lancaster contract has created a large trained staff of technicians and workers with actual experience in producing the very type of machine which is required."