political controversy if the buses are the subject of public complaints. So apart from providing a good reliable vehicle, we must also ensure that our service is first class."

Competes for markets

Flyer vies for the North American market with nine competitors, four or five of which bid on every contract for civic transit buses. In recent years the company has received many orders from Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Boston, Anchorage, Seattle and Syracuse, New York.

The company was founded in 1930 as Western Auto and Truck Body Works. It was a small company until the Second World War, when it received a major federal contract to build trucks for Canada's armed forces. During the 1950s, it manufactured highway buses and in 1968 moved into urban transit vehicles, now its sole product. The Manitoba Development Corporation bought the company in 1971.

Currently researchers are developing trolley buses that store up kinetic energy and operate without lines. This would ultimately make the trolley a viable alternative to the diesel, said Mr. McKay. In addition research and development is under way on a new bus which will be introduced in the mid-1980s, and the company is studying the possibility of producing expanded-length articulated buses.

Flyer is also interested in developing offshore and Third World markets; one of its buses is now being tested in Peru.

Bush aircraft featured on autumn stamp issue

Canada Post has issued the last four stamps in its Canadian aircraft series, featuring bush planes.

"The bush aircraft hastened the development of the remote areas of our country and added a distinctive Canadian touch to world aviation," said André Ouellet, Minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation in announcing the stamps.

The two 30-cent postage stamps feature the Fairchild *FC-2W1* and the de Havilland Canada *Beaver,* and the 60-cent stamp shows the Fokker *Super Universal* and the Noorduyn *Norseman.*

Although the Fairchild *FC-2W1* was not built in Canada, several of them gained fame in Canada by flying the first airmail run to Sept-Iles and dropping the mail by parachute. In 1928 the aircraft helped in the rescue of some German flyers stranded in the Strait of Belle Isle.

The de Havilland Canada *Beaver* was designed shortly after the Second World War and first flew in 1947. Almost 1 700 of the aircraft were built in Canada and were sold to Canadian customers as well as to foreign customers in more than 60 countries.

Canadian Vickers Limited of Montreal built 15 Fokker *Super Universals.* The aircraft was known for its durability. For example, after having been abandoned in a 1929 Arctic expedition and recovered 11 months later, one plane started with little trouble. In another instance, a *Super Universal* that had sunk in the Burnside River flew perfectly when salvaged.

The Noorduyn *Norseman* went into production in Montreal and was the work of Robert Noorduyn, an expatriate Dutchman who arrived in Canada in 1934. A notable feature of the single-engined monoplane was its ability to take off and land in a relatively short distance carrying a heavy cargo.

The bush aircraft stamps were designed by Robert Bradford and Jacques Charette of Ottawa. The aircraft depicted on the stamps are as follows: Roméo Vachon's *FC-2W1* delivering mail; the prototype *Beaver,* now in the National Aeronautical Collection; the *Norseman* as a Saskatchewan air ambulance; and "Punch" Dickins' *Super Universal* G-CASK.

Mini-reactors could heat buildings

Large businesses, hospitals and schools in remote northern communities may soon stoke their furnaces with uranium, reports the *Canadian Press.*

Dr. John Hilborn, a nuclear physicist with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, said research being conducted by his staff at the Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories is showing that a small nuclear reactor could safely replace, or be combined with, the diesel generators now producing electricity in communities cut off from power lines.

Dr. Hilborn said that a prototype will be ready in about one year.

The units will not bear much resemblance to the large nuclear power stations. Instead, they can be housed in a basement or a structure adjacent to the building being heated.

Dr. Hilborn said nuclear furnaces are no more difficult to operate than conventional diesel generating stations. And they only require refuelling every five years, with adjustments once a month.

Several Canadian universities have used a slightly different version for experiments for nearly 12 years, he said.

The fuel for the furnace is a bundle of enriched uranium rods about the size of a wastebasket, which is suspended in water. In combination with the water, the uranium undergoes fission and the splitting of atoms produces heat.

The water surrounding the reactor is heated to the boiling point and this heat is, in turn, conducted to another water system fully separated from the reactor.

Hot water from this second water system is then piped to the building.