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Mirabel, Montreal's mammoth airport, off to a flying start

Montreal's new international airport, Mirabel, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau on October 4 before some 2,500 guests and officials including Premier Robert Bourassa of Quebec, former Transport Minister Jean Marchand, Mayor Jean Drapeau of Montreal, diplomats, foreign airline officials and Canadian aviation administrators.

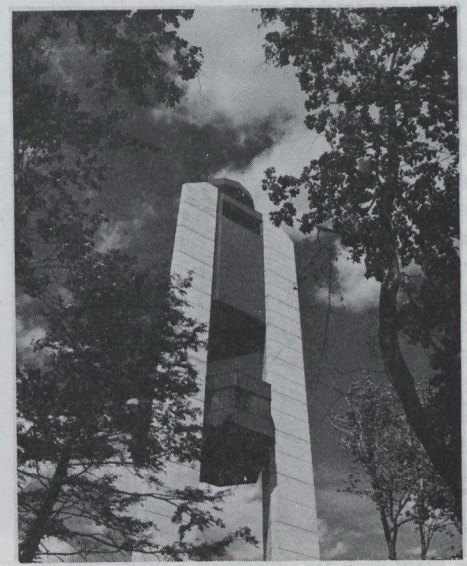
The airport, located 34 miles from Montreal, has been estimated at about \$325 million and occupies the largest land area for its purpose in the world — 138 square miles, or over two-thirds the size of Montreal island. Some 850,000 cubic yards of concrete went into the paving of the runways, taxiways and aircraft aprons — enough to pave a highway from Montreal to Quebec City (160 miles).

Design for the future

Dominated by a 215-foot high control tower, the tallest in Canada, Mirabel was designed not only to meet present needs but, primarily, to satisfy requirements of air traffic into the next century. To do this, sufficient land was acquired for expansion and plans call for integration in the Montreal North Shore area.

Expansions will keep the airport functional until the year 2025. In its first phase, which begins operations on October 26, it is equipped to handle as many as 4,000 passengers an hour and is expected to service some 3.5 million passengers and 500,000 tons of cargo this year.

The Prime Minister said that the far-sighted planning of Mirabel "would preclude the possibility of the site being strangled by urban sprawl", and pledged that the planners would "continue to show respect for the natural and social environment of the surrounding area". Premier Bourassa said that the airport would open "many perspectives on a regional and local level", and that it "would ensure the spread of economic wealth to the outmost reaches of the province", while Mr. Marchand described it as "the most



The 215-foot control tower, which has a triangular base, is the visitor's first glimpse of Mirabel.

complete air service and industrial concept currently in existence".

Gradual transfer from Dorval

Mirabel will take on international flights and associated domestic and transborder traffic on the 17,000 acres that have been reserved for airport operations. The distribution of air traffic for the new facility has been based on a gradual transfer from Montreal's older airport, Dorval, which is expected to reduce Dorval traffic from eight million passengers in 1974 to five million this year. Dorval will continue to handle flights within Canada and the United States. By the 1980s, Mirabel will probably service about 50 per cent of the total air traffic at Montreal.

The plan has been designed to permit the independent expansion of principal facilities — from an initial two runways and one terminal, 1,160 feet by 300 feet, to six runways and six terminals. The two present runways each measure 12,000 by 200 feet and each can support loads of up to one million pounds. Together, the two runways will be able to accommodate as many as 75 aircraft