

Mirabel airport opened to 'no frill' fares

Canada and the United States have agreed to a three-year experiment that Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy hopes will turn Mirabel International Airport, near Montreal into a Canadian hub for "no-frills" airlines.

The agreement will allow any Canadian or US airline to fly from Mirabel airport to almost any US city without restriction on air fares, frequency of flights or type of airplane used.

The two countries have also reached an agreement in principle to give automatic approval to regional and local airlines wanting to serve transborder routes between small



Lloyd Axworthy

cities. Mr. Axworthy said the agreement was "a major breakthrough" that has ended a ten-year stalemate in bilateral negotiations over air routes. The agreement is to be followed by further talks on major transborder air routes.

The special rules for Mirabel will apply for three years, and then be subject to cancellation by either side on six months' notice. The United States has the right to designate a similar under-used airport of its own.

Excluded airports

Six US gateways will be excluded from the experimental program. Airlines will not be able to fly freely from Mirabel to New York, Boston, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle.

People Express Airlines Inc. of Newark, New Jersey, turned that city's airport, adja-

cent to New York, into a major hub for both domestic and transatlantic low-fare traffic. Mr. Axworthy hopes the agreement will turn Mirabel into the Newark of Eastern Canada.

"We have a very effective plant but very limited traffic," he said. If nothing else, the government hopes the cheap-fare services running out of Mirabel will persuade people to drive there from Montreal rather than across the border to airports like Burlington, Vermont, to fly with no-frills US airlines.

The government is also considering "incentive-pricing" measures that might reduce landing fees and airport user charges at other under-utilized airports.

The new rules for transborder commuter routes are not as liberal as those governing the Mirabel experiment.

Canadian cities eligible for such services must be within 400 miles of the border in central Canada and within 600 miles in the West, in Atlantic Canada and in eastern Quebec. US cities must be within an equivalent distance of the border, but Mr. Axworthy said the geographical details have not been worked out.

Eligible Canadian cities must have a population of less than 500 000 people, and US cities must be under one million.

Only one carrier from each country can serve any particular pair of eligible cities, and must use aircraft with less than 60 seats, which excludes jet service.

Mr. Axworthy said improved transborder service to smaller centres could take pressure off the crowded major airports, such as Vancouver and Toronto. In addition to giving consumers a greater choice of routes, the government will be able to put off expensive projects to expand the major airports.

Canadian technology shines in Paris



Canada's exhibit dominated the Quai Branly site beneath the Eiffel Tower.

TECHNICANADA, a unique Canadian technology solo exhibit featuring 60 Canadian companies captured the interest of 26 800 French and foreign visitors last month. Held in Paris, France, the TECHNICANADA structure dominated the Quai Branly site at the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

Michel Dupuy, Canadian Ambassador to France, and Jacques Chirac, Mayor of Paris, inaugurated the exhibition celebrating Jacques Cartier's arrival in Canada in 1534 and this country's technological innovations since.

The Canadian companies, together with three federal government departments, shared the limelight at TECHNICANADA which was organized by the Department of External Affairs. The exhibits featured examples of Canadian technological expertise in telecommunications, offshore exploration, architecture, electronic musical instruments, computer imagery, office automation, agriculture, mining, energy and medicine.

A lifesize model of the famous Canadian used to deploy satellites on the US space shuttle, was the highlight of the TECHNICANADA show.

Canadian studies grant

A total of \$11.7 million over the next three years to support programs in Canadian studies has been approved by the government of Canada.

The new Canadian Studies Program replaces the National Program of Support for Canadian Studies, which ended this year after providing \$3.8 million over the past three years to help major organizations in the field and some 60 independent projects across Canada.

The new program, with its threefold increase in funding, signals expansion of federal support for Canadian studies initiatives in the field, as well as activities of groups and associations in both the formal and non-formal educational systems.