

Testing in Newfoundland

The new accessible bus began a three-year trial with TerraTransport in Newfoundland in February 1985. The province was considered ideal for testing the prototype as there are no passenger trains and intercity bus is the only surface transportation linking cities and towns.

The initial test period was very successful. Operating two regular trips a week, one a distance of 960 kilometres and the other of 560 kilometres, there have been only two minor technical problems with the elevator.

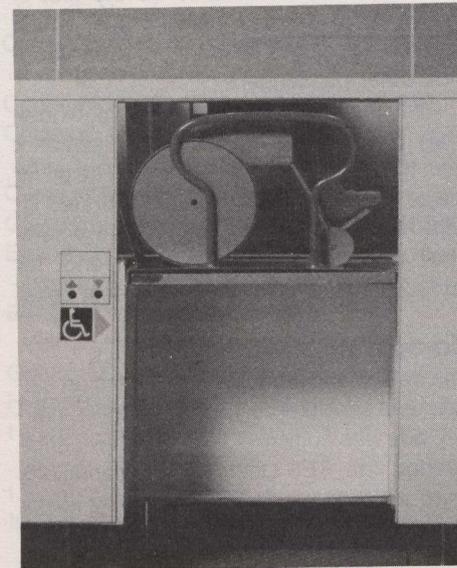
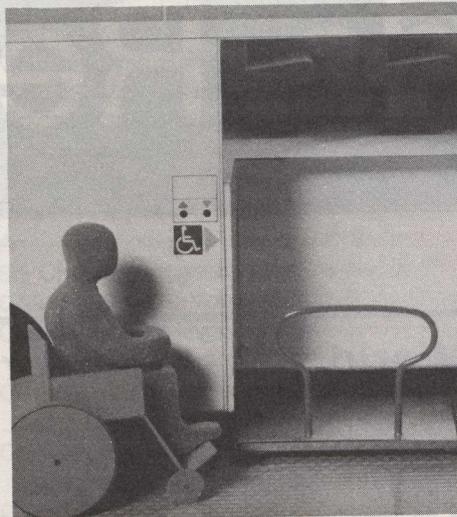
Further, Milton House of Transport Canada reported that some five disabled people have used the service a month. "It may not sound like many but considering the bus is on the road for a basic eight trips a month it is obviously meeting a real need," he added.

Interest in the bus and the new technology is growing not only in Canada, but in the United States, as well.

Officials from the state of Massachusetts viewed the demonstration prototype in St. John's and ordered six as part of a 26-bus order from MCI. Boston Transit will operate the buses on park-and-ride routes between the suburbs and the city core.

MCI now forecasts a potential market for 150 000 accessible buses on US commuter routes. At \$200 000 a bus, sales could reach as high as \$30 billion.

There are plans to demonstrate a prototype of the *Mark II* version across Canada and at Expo 86. Also the new bus will be exhibited at Handex 86, China's first national exhibition on care for the disabled. TES president Laurin Garland said that China asked his firm to give a seminar at the exhibition, that is expected to increase export opportunities for the technology.



Design concepts from Rutenberg Design Inc. show how a passenger is transported some 100 centimetres inside the bus from the curb to seating level.

Continued aid for Haiti

Minister for External Relations Monique Vézina, in a statement released February 7, stressed that Canada remains committed to support and assist the people of Haiti in their current situation. Following are excerpts from her speech:

Our concern for the respect of human rights and for the well-being of the population has dominated our approach to Haiti and determined the tone and content of our relations with its government.

Today, Haiti begins a new era. A provisional government has replaced the administration of Jean-Claude Duvalier. The Haitian people hope for a new and better future. All Canadians, I know, share that hope and wish them well. We look forward to the eventual establishment of democracy and to a government committed to the protection of the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

A new beginning brings with it opportunities and also great challenges. The government of Canada is aware of the difficulties and of the special needs that the new government of Haiti faces as it begins its difficult task. We pledge to maintain our commitment to the improvement of the lives of the Haitian people, and are ready to make a significant effort to assist in meeting the urgent needs that Haiti now faces.

Southern Africa conference

Government leader in the Senate, Duff Roblin, led the Canadian delegation to the annual meeting of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in Harare, Zimbabwe, January 30-31.

At the conference, Senator Roblin reaffirmed Canada's commitment to provide \$120 million over the next five years to implement development projects. SADCC was established by nine African states (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) in Lusaka in 1980 to reduce external dependence and foster regional integration.

Malawi visit

Following the conference, February 1-5, Senator Roblin visited Malawi, where he met with Malawi's leaders to review relations with Canada. Together with President Banda of Malawi he opened the Natural Resources College, an integrated facility for the training of extension workers. Canadian development assistance funds were used to build the College and train several of its staff.



Prototype MCI bus has enjoyed a successful year on TerraTransport routes in Newfoundland.