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## Canada's new international airport – an aviation milestone

In the spring of 1975, another air terminal will begin operations in the Montreal area – the new Mirabel International Airport. This immense project, on which \$400 million will have been spent by the end of this year, is located 34 miles (54.7 km) west-northwest of downtown Montreal and 32 miles (51.5 km) northwest of the present Dorval International Airport. It will initially handle only international traffic but gradually it will acquire all of the Dorval traffic except for flights within Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes. This shift of traffic away from Dorval and into Mirabel will assure that operations at the older airport are maintained at their optimum level of six million passengers annually, a rate which was first surpassed in 1972. In fact, this year, 8.1 million passengers are expected to move through Dorval.

Mirabel has been designed as a "Third Generation" airport – the first of its kind in Canada. The total complex covers 88,000 acres (35,612 hectares) representing the largest airport area in the world. While only one-sixteenth of this land mass – some 5,200 acres (2,105 hectares) – will be utilized for airport facilities in the initial phase, the final phase – by the year 2025 – will see this increased to a 17,000-acre area (6,883 hectares). The distinctive feature of the airport will be the complete control exercised over the entire area surrounding the functional section. This not only will ensure protection from urban encroachment, it will also provide airport planners with the necessary power to control the development of the Mirabel area, which is about two-thirds the size of Montreal Island or about one-tenth the land area of Prince Edward Island. The peripheral area of 71,000 acres falls under strict zoning regulations which permit only those activities compatible with airport development. In some cases, the original agricultural pursuits will be maintained – although farmers will now only lease their land – but control will be

exercised, for instance, over the growing of certain crops. The constant hazard of birds at airports will be reduced through the draining of marshes, and the forbidding of the cultivation of those crops, such as corn and oats, which tend to attract birds.

### First phase

Phase One of the Mirabel development will span the years 1975-1979. This initial phase will include the use of two runways and one passenger terminal, capable of accommodating about 300,000 aircraft movements a year and 3.7 million passengers. The aircraft will be parked away from the terminal building and passengers will be conveyed between the building and the aircraft by passenger-transfer vehicles which will accommodate as many as 150 passengers and travel at speeds up to 15 miles an hour (24.1 km).

By the final completion date, in 2025, the airport will have six runways, grouped as three sets of parallel pairs with two pairs extending northeast-southwest, and one pair in the cross-wind direction, as well as the full complement of airport facilities necessary to handle an expected annual passenger turnover of 50 million.

### Airport-city link

An important aspect of the Mirabel project will be the surface transportation link between the airport and the two major metropolitan centres of Montreal and Ottawa. For the initial phase, a series of new and connecting autoroutes are expected to be sufficient. However, it is proposed that these will be supplemented by the early 1980s by a high-speed electric mass-transit system (TRRAMM), which will link downtown Montreal with Mirabel using the existing right-of-way provided by the rail track structure through the utilization of rail cars capable of reaching speeds of up to 161 km an hour. This project is estimated to cost about \$438 million in 1973 dollar terms. The proposed rail line would be inte-