

Tom McMillan's day in North York hinges on ice



Smiling happily, Environment Minister Tom McMillan gives a thumbs-up salute from the cockpit of the de Havilland DASH-7 aircraft.

Environment Minister Tom McMillan spent an action-packed day in Metropolitan Toronto May 23. The two major events of his lightning visit were the official acceptance of an extended range de Havilland DASH-7 ice reconnaissance aircraft on behalf of Environment Canada and the signing of an agreement with Toronto's York University to establish a centre for weather forecasting. This latter concentrates on the application of satellite data to the production of ocean weather and ice conditions in Canada.

The handing-over ceremony of the DASH-7 took place in a hangar belonging to de Havilland at Downsview, Ontario. A crowd of more than 100 de Havilland employees, AES officials, ice observers and media gathered to watch de Havilland Canada president William Boggs present the plane's log book to Mr. McMillan.

In a short speech the Minister said the new aircraft, outfitted with a wide range of Canadian-designed and built high technology ice equipment, would help Environment Canada improve its key role of supplying ice data to Canadian offshore fishing, shipping and resource industries and in addition "enhance our abilities to protect our vast and fragile northern environment".

The aircraft was built by de Havilland/Boeing under a \$26 million contract signed in 1983. The modified DASH-7 has an extended range of 1150 nautical miles and is outfitted with side-looking airborne radar, a laser

profilometer for measuring ice contours, and a sophisticated data link between the aircraft, shipping below and Ice Central in Ottawa.

Also on the podium was ADMA Howard Ferguson who introduced the Minister and gave a short speech on the history of the Ice Service.

Former Minister of Transport, Don Mazankowski, sent his regrets at not being able to attend the ceremony. The department of Transport is the official signatory of the contract with de Havilland.

At York University, participating in a ceremony with vice-president, Dr. Kenneth Davey, the Minister said York's Centre for Research in Experimental Space Science (CRESS) is among the first of its kind in Canada. "The information extracted from this joint venture will help ensure the safety of our coastal fishermen and offshore industries," he said.

Mr. McMillan emphasized that the centre was a joint operation of Environment Canada's Ice Research and Development Division, CRESS, and Ph.D. Associates representing the high-tech industrial involvement.

Scientists at the centre will develop new techniques to use satellite data in forecasting weather and ice conditions. Satellite instruments turned to microwave energy emitted by the earth's surface can give a clear picture of weather and ice conditions over the ocean, even in total darkness. The Centre's techniques will be used as early as 1987 when a new US weather satellite will be launched. Such satellite data will probably aid forecasting of flood and heavy rain conditions for inland areas in the near future.

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Howard Ferguson
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A cross-section of the Ice Branch and of senior AES officials attending the handing-over ceremony for the de Havilland DASH-7. A group of them is seen beside the aircraft here with Environment Minister Tom McMillan (fourth from the left). They are left to right: John Comeau, Emil Stasyshyn, Don Champ (director Ice Branch), Tom McMillan, Bob Zacharuk, Brian Kirkpatrick, Howard Ferguson (ADMA), Bernie Wyer, Jim McCulloch (director general, Central Services Directorate), Tom Kilpatrick, Jim Woods.