

Prince Philip opens Rhoose Air Terminal

THE NEW £4m Rhoose Airport is vital to the future development of Wales, said the Duke of Edinburgh, when opening the new passenger terminal on Monday.

Prince Philip unveiled a plaque to commemorate his opening of the airport, and told more than 500 guests at the opening ceremony: "The reconstruction of this airport is a triumph for local enterprise. Speaking as a pilot, I have been using this airport since 1957, and I can say it is much more agreeable to use now than it was then. Every pound spent on the reconstruction is a sound investment."

The opening of the passenger terminal marks the end of the £4,250,000 development scheme for Rhoose launched five years ago by the airport's owners, Glamorgan County Council.

PUBLIC SUPPORT

The Duke said: "A casual observer at this opening ceremony would remark that this event was somewhat uncalled for, as Rhoose has been in existence as a civil airport for more than 20 years. However, a great deal of reconstruction has taken place in the way of the new terminal building, runways and navigational systems.

"It needed strong, popular support to get the former Ministry of Aviation to make it a civil airport and then in 1965 the Glamorgan County Council took over responsibility. It is entirely due to the plans made at that time that this reconstruction has taken place."

Fast, reliable and convenient transport might be highly desirable and even essential to the economic success of an industrial community, but no one liked to pay the bill.

Even now, the installation of an instrument landing system was being held up by an argument about who should foot the bill. There was no doubt that the system was desirable now, and would soon become absolutely essential.

The airport director at Rhoose, Mr. E. J. Moloney, said later that discussions on financing the system were still taking place and it had been agreed it should be installed next spring.

The Right Rev. Stephen Thomas, Bishop of Llandaff, dedicated the airport with a short prayer, after which County Councillor Leslie Richards, Chairman of the Airport Committee, presented the Duke with two volumes

of the history of the County of Glamorgan, as a souvenir to mark the occasion of his visit.

Prince Philip then proceeded to the luncheon tent where, after a toast to Prince Charles, the guests in a typically Welsh fashion sang "God bless the Prince of Wales."

After lunch the Duke went on a tour of the new airport buildings and spoke to passengers, airport staff and officials in the new technical block.

He stopped and asked one little girl if she was waiting to go on holiday and she replied: "I'm just waiting to see you."

At the end of his visit the Duke piloted a twin-engined Andover of the Queen's Flight, after telling officials he was "tremendously impressed" with the new building.