

Shannon income set to reach new record

By **JIMMY
WOULFE**

SPENDING by foreign visitors at Shannon airport is expected to continue climbing in 1994 with the arrival this week of Saudi Arabian Airlines who are now using Shannon for the transatlantic stop-over.

They had been using Paris, but were offered a more competitive deal by Aer Rianta at Shannon.

A key element in the Shannon package is the availability of aviation fuel at cheaper rates.

When Aeroflot first came to Shannon, the airline has a barter deal with Aer

Rianta whereby it traded fuel for airport charges. This arrangement still operates in part.

Last year more than one million passengers passed through the airport for the first time.

The big-spending Saudis are expected to boost the airport turnover which last year exceeded £60 million for the first time.

And Aer Rianta now expect other Middle-Eastern airlines to look at Shannon as a stop over base, because of the Saudi presence.

Said Michael Guerin, airport general manager: "Last year saw air services linking Shannon with Los Angeles, Barbados and Minsk operated by Translift, Aeroflot and Bellavia (the Belarus break-away of Aeroflot) airlines respectively. The number of passengers from European destinations again increased

and confirmed Shannon's primary role in distributing these visitors to the tourism regions in the South and West of Ireland. UK traffic had increased over 1992 while transit traffic had increased by four per cent benefiting in the final three months of the year from the numbers of US troops en-route to Europe and Africa. Internal traffic had shown a slight decrease in 1992."

Mr Guerin stated that Aer Rianta welcomed the setting up of the new Irish Aviation Authority from this year and looked forward to working closely with the new authority to the benefit of Shannon. He said employment in Aer Rianta had been maintained throughout the year and the additional summer business in 1993 had meant that the number of extra seasonal staff had been at its highest level for several years.