

Canadian Expo' 67 Honoring Indians with Huge Pavilion

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By BETZI WOODMAN

Efforts of the Indians of Canada to adapt to modern technological society while still preserving the traditional moral and spiritual values of their forefathers will be told in story and symbolized in a building at EXPO '67, the Canadian Centennial's prime exhibition site.

A scale model of the building, called the Indians of Canada Pavilion, was recently unveiled by Canadian offi-

cials, including the Commissioner-General of the Pavilion, Andrew Tanahokate Delisle, Chief of the Caughnawaga Band (tribe).

"The pavilion is intended to be a genuine statement by the Indian people to the rest of the people of Canada and to the world," Chief Delisle said. "Indians in all parts of Canada have shared in creating the Pavilion's philosophy and we believe it truly reflects the Indians' thinking about themselves and their

world."

A wood and steel tower in the form of a stylized tee-pee, 100 feet high, is the main architectural feature. The tower's base provides a circular exhibit area 74 feet in diameter making nearly 7,000 square feet of floor space. Total cost of the whole project will exceed \$1 million provided from funds of the Indian Affairs Branch of the government.

Visitors will approach the

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tower through a series of smaller pavilions which represent stylized versions of other traditional Indian dwellings.

The Pavilion is set in a site of 30,000 square feet, landscaped to give a naturally rugged setting, with a small lake and trees characteristic of all parts of Canada, and shrubs and plants which have had a special meaning in Indian life.

By late December designers and contractors may begin installing exhibits, many of which will be created by Indian artists.

"This job is not simply to create a Pavilion," said Joseph W. Francis, chief architect and project coordinator. "We are also providing an opportunity for the Indian people to exercise their initiative and to enrich their experience and skills by participating to the fullest possible extent in an important and significant project which lies close to their hearts. The Pavilion has already become a kind of symbol of a cultural renaissance among the Indian people and a focus of their aspirations for a stronger sense of identity and unity.

Twelve Indian girls from all parts of Canada have been selected for training as Pavilion hostesses, from among more than 280 applicants. The girls were judged on appearance, intelligence, character and personality. They will undergo a four-month training program in Montreal which will include refresher courses in Indian history and culture, personality development and grooming and some knowledge of an extra language (French or English).

The storyline — philosophical basis of the Pavilion — was written in consultation with Indian leaders in all parts of Canada. A series of

three-day meetings was held in four centers across the land at which Indian leaders, artists and craftsmen and Indians with a special interest in their tradition and culture, were invited to discuss the most important ideas which they wished to convey to the people of Canada and the world who will visit EXPO.

Final plans for story, building and exhibit were approved by the Pavilion's National Indian Advisory Council in Ottawa and Montreal. The council is made up of eight Indian leaders representing all parts of Canada.

Many of the most important exhibits will be executed by the Indians themselves and the Pavilion will include carvings, crafts, murals and other paintings and Indian works of art. The story itself, though told through modern communication techniques, will encompass the Indians' past, present and future. It will attempt to show the life led by the Indian before the coming of the White Man:

"In the beginning, there was the land—the forest, the rivers and the lakes, the mountains and the plains, and all the creatures that walked on the land, flew in the air and swam in the waters.

"And the creatures of the world lived, one with another, in harmony and order. All owed each other respect and reverence."

The story traces the conflicts which arose when Europeans "discovered" North America, how the Indians became embroiled in the White Man's wars, and the lands of The People passed into the hands of the new arrivals. It deals with the role of government and church in the lives of the Indians, the signing of treaties and the establishment of the reserve system.

Present-day Indian life, which is dealt with in the main tower area, attempts to explain the importance to the modern Indian of the reserve, a moral and spiritual fortress within which he defends his identity."

Living and working conditions of the Indians of today will be dealt with, showing that although "much earnest consideration and many millions of dollars have been expended to give the Indians education, houses, health care and other public services, they still lag far behind the non-Indian in the necessities of a healthy, meaningful life."

Indians' ideas about the future will also be reflected. Some see the Indian disappearing, as the new generation accepts and adapts to the White Man's ways.

There are growing numbers of Indians, however, who have a version of an Indian society which will combine with the best of Indian and European civilizations—North American technology, paired with traditional Indian philosophy and moral values.

One man, Wallace Labllois, chairman of the National Indian Advisory Council, states it this way: "The Indian is in a turmoil,—he is grasping the future with one hand, while, with the other, he is holding onto the values he wants to keep from his past. If he is going to adapt successfully to modern life, he will have to pull as hard with one hand as with the other."

Indians in all parts of Canada who took part in evolving the story suggested that the contribution the Indian can make to the world is to show how they are able to participate in the mass technology of the modern age, while preserving their personal integrity and the virtues of their fathers.