

## NEW ARTS CENTRE

One of the most exciting building projects in Toronto is nearing completion at the corner of Front and Yonge Streets. This is the O'Keefe Centre, Toronto's new multi-purpose entertainment centre, presenting the best in show business-- musical comedy, revue, opera, symphony, drama, ballet.

The \$12 million building, scheduled to open in the fall, is the result of five years of planning and construction. Its policy embraces the housing of the best of international companies and the finest Canadian attractions. Operating as a non-profit enterprise, it answers Toronto's need for a centre of the arts appropriate to a city of a million and a half people.

O'Keefe Centre has been designed by Toronto architects Earle C. Morgan and Page and Steele in consultation with Eggers and Higgins of New York. Anglin-Norcross are the general contractors. Through an emphasis on line and colour and an imaginative use of building materials (granite, glass and limestone) the architects and engineers have contrived to give the structure a grace and lightness completely interpretative of its purpose.

Beyond the wide entrance portals is the main lobby running the width of the building and opening into lounge areas that flank the auditorium on three levels. Dominating the main lounge is the 100-foot mural painted by the Canadian R. York Wilson, a panorama of the "Seven Lively Arts" through the ages.

The auditorium, housing a 1,000-seat balcony and a 2,200-seat, raked main floor, is so designed that no patron is further than 124 feet from the stage. The house can be reduced to 1,100 seats by the drawing of an acoustic curtain in front of the balcony.

### THE STAGE

The stage-floor area is 128 by 60 feet, with a 60-by-30 foot proscenium that can be reduced to 36 by 18 feet. Extensive stage-receiving area, stage office and service elevator flank the stage on one side. Dressing-rooms and a rehearsal hall are on the other side.

The building has been constructed to exclude extraneous noise and to provide the most favourable acoustic conditions. Sound reinforcement systems are available whenever required. One of the unique features of the auditorium itself is the construction of the theatre side-walls consisting of sliding wood panels, which operate on a system of reflection and absorption. Their position controls the quality of sound through the range of a single human voice to a full orchestra.

A mechanically-elevated orchestra pit has space for fifty musicians. When larger orchestras are required, the pit can be enlarged to accommodate an additional 40 musicians on a level behind the orchestra pit and below the

stage. The orchestra pit also can be raised to form a twelve-foot extension to the stage itself, or, at auditorium floor level, an extension of the auditorium, seating an extra 83 patrons. For orchestral performances on stage, a specially-designed acoustic shell can be lowered into position on stage to project sound into the auditorium.

Backstage facilities provide company offices, a rehearsal hall built to stage scale, eight star dressing-rooms and a green room adjacent to the stage. Dressing rooms for 100 chorus members are situated immediately above stage level. Change rooms, rehearsal rooms and locker rooms for orchestra members lie below stage level.

Modern adjustable lighting is being installed to service every type of production--drama, films, concerts, ballet, opera and television. Stage lighting can be pre-set for as many as ten scenes through automatic control.

Another unique feature of the theatre is its equipment for radio and television broadcasting. Control and announcer rooms have been located in strategic places overlooking both stage and rehearsal areas.

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## B.C. TRADE FAIR

British Columbia's trade economy will receive major impetus when the second International Trade Fair is held at Exhibition Park, Vancouver, May 3 to 13, 1961, according to Mr. R.W. Bonner, B.C. Minister of Industrial Development, Trade, and Commerce.

"We enjoyed exceptional success on the occasion of the first BCIFT in 1958," stated Mr. Bonner. "After that show, more than 90 per cent of the exhibitors declared themselves highly pleased and indicated they would return. From time to time, since then, they have verified that opinion. Now, as arrangements are being made for the 1961 BCIFT they are giving practical effect to that view and many are even taking additional space to that used in 1958."

For the new Fair, organization work was started earlier. It already appears that there will be sixteen countries having national or government exhibits and some forty nations represented by individual exhibitors.

The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, and West Germany have already signed and negotiations with others are well advanced. Many individual firms are signed and, in this category, negotiations with others are also well advanced. Interest in the expanding Western Canada market is higher than ever.

British Columbia enjoys a rather large favourable balance of trade in the statistics covering exports and imports through its customs ports. In the first nine months of 1959 the cumulative total for exports was \$664,752,810, as opposed to \$380,628,740 for