

World Exhibitions Program

1975 Ocean Exposition, Japan

Canada was one of the 39 national participants in the International Ocean Exposition (Expo 75), Okinawa, Japan, to be ready for the press preview on July 9. Participation was sponsored by the Department of External Affairs, Environment Canada, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Ministry of Science and Technology. The exhibit was designed and constructed by Information Canada/Expositions.

The exposition, the first to deal with the sea, having as its theme "The Sea We Would Like to See", opened officially on July 20 and will close on January 18, 1976. Since this was a special rather than a universal exposition, basic pavilion structures were provided by the organizers and improved as desired by the participants. The site was a rather remote one, on the beautiful Motobu Peninsula, at the northern end of Okinawa. Because of the economic recession, the exposition's attendance and publicity were somewhat below the levels predicted.

The Canadian pavilion, situated in the Science and Technology cluster of pavilions with those of Australia, Italy, the United States and the Soviet Union, was built round the theme "The sea has its own laws and man is accountable". Praised for the sincerity and competence of its staff, which consisted of 20 young Canadians, all fluent in Japanese, the building attracted about 40 per cent of the 3.5 million persons who were estimated to have visited Expo 75.

The theme was illustrated by a backlighted horizontal map of Canada measuring 38 feet by 25 feet, which featured prominently the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic coastlines, and by conventional and audio-visual presentations that stressed Canada's historical dependence on the sea and its unceasing concern for the preservation of that element.

Included in the exhibit, which covered roughly 8,000 square feet, were animated models illustrating Canada's technology in scientific and industrial exploration and in development of the sea and its resources, as well as a short animated film, produced by the National Film Board, illustrating the consequences that could result from continued abuse of the sea. Man's need to preserve the sea for recreational purposes was illustrated by a display of seagoing pleasure craft produced in Canada.

Audience participation was encouraged by the use of "aniforms", a closed-circuit television technique by which an amusing caricature of a sea animal engaged spectators in light-hearted banter or sought their reaction to the exhibit and their opinion on environmental matters. A screen of "recycled" ropes, woven partly on site by Patricia Wheeler of Vancouver, related Canadian art to the theme of the exposition.

Canada's participation in the International Ocean Exposition is considered to have been successful since it made the Japanese, and the international audience as well, more aware of Canada's concern for the preservation of the oceans and of its capacity to play a significant role in future ocean development.

Horticultural exhibition, Quebec City

Canada's application, made by the Department of External Affairs in December 1974, to the International Bureau of Exhibitions, Paris, to register an International Horticultural Exposition planned for 1976 by the Province of Quebec was accepted by the Bureau at its meeting on April 30, 1975. Subsequently, however, in view of the short time available to organize the event for 1976, the province postponed it until 1977 and finally, for economic reasons, decided to cancel it altogether.