

MARCH 1982

The 60-million-dollar contribution to the rapid transit arrives, and Premier Bennett performs the ceremonial sod turning; but the cancellation of EXPO 86 is now a foregone conclusion in the media. Ottawa is accusing Premier Bennett of seeking an excuse to cancel the project. Mayor Harcourt lobbies Prime Minister Trudeau to commit to the Pier BC trade and convention centre after the demise of the exposition. The promised decision is postponed and silence sets in as Ottawa and Victoria continue negotiations. BC Place Report #2 is published as BC Place pledges improved cooperation with Expo.

APRIL 1982

On April 1, 1982, Premier Bennett makes a surprise announcement. The Government of Canada will construct a host Canadian pavilion on Pier BC. It will be designed for conversion to a trade and convention centre and cruise ship facility after 1986. British Columbia will assume management and financing of EXPO 86 unilaterally. Canada's commitment of 25 million dollars towards the deficit will be redirected towards the construction of the Canadian pavilion. The two sites will be connected by a dedicated rapid transit line. The assets of Pier BC are transferred to the Federal Government. An operating organization will assume management of the facility and neither government will retain an interest in ownership.

Finally, the creation of a new lottery, specifically designed to help finance the construction of EXPO 86, is announced. Thus, Vancouver gains a trade and convention centre financed by Ottawa, its rapid transit grant, and a funding device for its world exposition. Peter Hyndman is named new Provincial Minister Responsible and Senator Jack Austin, Minister of State for Social Development, is appointed Federal Minister Responsible.

The momentum of EXPO 86 activity accelerates rapidly under interim General Manager Michael Burns. Site planning finally advances beyond the rudimentary as the Freschi team refines development. An executive search is begun with emphasis on locating a Chief Executive Officer to replace Burns, who wished to end his temporary role. The Board of Directors is broadened to include new appointees. Site acquisition efforts are intensified as BC Place and EXPO 86 coordination is improved. The international marketing thrust resumes as Patrick Reid sets off in search of widespread participation. Office accommodation is sought for a burgeoning reborn Corporation. Prime Minister Trudeau performs sod turning ceremony for start of site preparation for Pier BC project.