

## Canada/Italy cultural pact

Canada and Italy signed their first cultural agreement recently, establishing a formal basis for cultural and academic exchanges between the two countries. The agreement was signed by Senator Susanna Agnelli, the visiting Italian Foreign Minister, and Canadian External Relations Minister Jean-Luc Pepin.

In the past, Canada and Italy handled academic and cultural exchanges through a long-standing formal exchange of notes that dates back to 1954. But the two countries stepped up negotiations for a more comprehensive agreement in recent years.

The main purpose of the agreement is to strengthen the cultural ties between the people of Canada and Italy and it covers a wide range of cultural and academic relations between the two countries. It also provides a formal framework for cultural exchange visits by artists, scholars and students.



Italy's Foreign Minister, Senator Susanna Agnelli (left) and Canadian External Relations Minister, Jean-Luc Pepin sign the first cultural agreement between the two countries.

## Expo 86 Futures Pavilion to open in 1985

A 15-storey high sphere built out over the waters of False Creek, in Vancouver, will open to the public a full year before Expo 86 opens its gates. The pavilion, which contains Canada's first Omnimax Theatre, was designed to serve two purposes.

"In the year before Expo opens," explained creative director Ron Woodall, "the Futures Pavilion gives people a glimpse of what's to come at Expo, and just what the transportation and communications theme means. During the six month run of Expo 86, the sphere will become one of four major theme pavilions."

Construction has already begun on the base for the 40-metre diameter sphere. Designed by Expo 86 chief architect Bruno Freschi, the sphere's highly reflective skin will be wrapped with a skeletal structure, and will have a symbolic lighting system.

### World's largest Omnimax screen

While the \$20-million "omni-sphere" contains other shows and exhibit areas, the big draw will be the Omnimax Theatre. Omnimax is a Canadian motion picture system which uses the largest photographic format ever employed, to create an image nine times larger than the 35-millimetre commercial movie film.

The Expo 86 Omnimax Theatre, developed by Imax Systems Corporation in Toronto, Ontario will be the first in Canada,

and the largest screen in the world. "People will feel they are actually in the picture," said Woodall. "They'll find out what it feels like to chatter across a lake in a high speed racing iceboat or roar into a tunnel at the front of a French TGV train at 400 kilometres per hour." Omnimax is also the only projector in the world capable of projecting a high-fidelity, full peripheral vision motion picture image on this scale. (See also article on Page 1, Canada Weekly dated May 2, 1984.)

### World to star in film

Imax has hired award-winning film-maker Michel Brault to direct the Expo Omnimax film, *A Freedom to Move*. Seventeen weeks of location shooting are scheduled for locations around the world, from the Arctic to Africa.

The message of the film is simply that,



Model of Expo's Futures Pavilion.

from the beginning of time, man has sought new routes to freedom. Each society, whatever its stage of technological development, has its own leading edge, its own state of the art. Some of the most enduring transportation forms have been the simplest, spanning centuries of use with only minimal change. "The problem," adds Woodall, "is producing something that will please both the layman and the professional. Using Omnimax, we can do just that."

En route to the Omnimax Theatre, the visitor spirals past a series of other shows and exhibits. "Design for 2000+" offers the leading edge of the future, with an international collection of designs in process which relate to Expo's transportation and communications theme. A future starship may be there — or machines which walk, futuristic automobiles, or deep tunnel international transport systems.

The Futures Theatre presents the future as hope, desire, fear, conjecture, best guess, and informed projection. Here the viewer has a chance to collectively predict the future, based on a series of exciting futuristic images. The future beliefs and future hopes of the layman can then be contrasted — or matched — with the educated guesses and informed foresight of "future thinking" professionals.

In the Futures Theatre Preshow, a sampling of 'high tech' computer graphics from around the world demonstrates a revolutionary means of visualization and communications.