

## CANADA'S FIRST

# WORLD'S FAIR

An irreverent advance look, in five parts, at what the boondoggling is about

BY PETER DESBARATS

ABOUT FORTY-TWO MONTHS from now, in the year of Canada's hundredth birthday, Expo '67, the biggest official world's fair ever held in North America, will open in

Montreal. Or then again, it may not. The governments of Montreal, Quebec and Canada have promised that it will be the "most terrific" official world's fair since Queen Victoria opened the Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851; that it

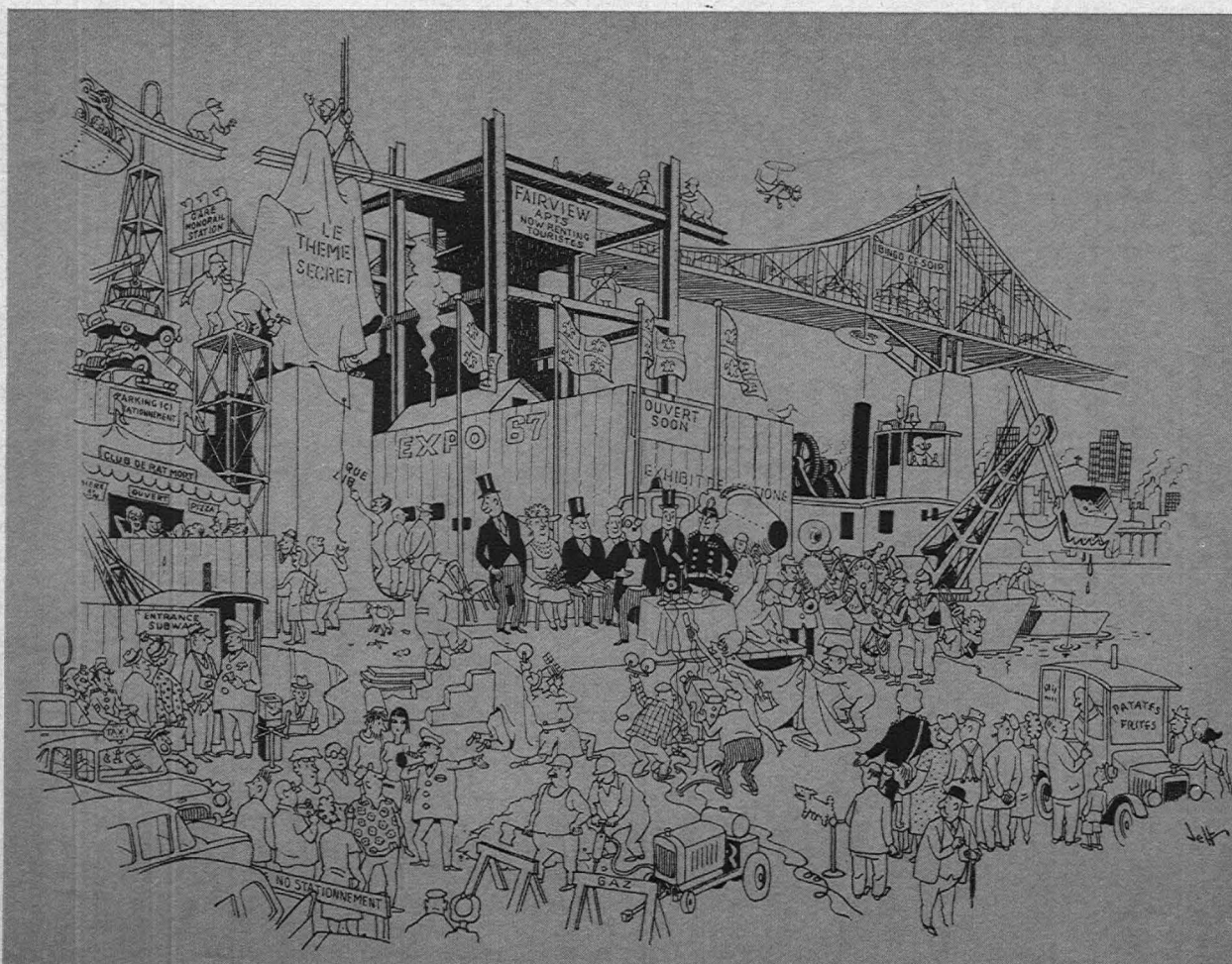
will attract from thirty-five million to fifty million visitors; that it will be worth every penny of the six hundred million dollars it will cost. But such is the current state of plans that the most logical next step might be to call the whole

thing off. As *Maclean's* went to press, in fact, several advisors to Prime Minister Lester Pearson were telling him to do just that. Pearson, at the time, appeared to be holding firm. The fair loomed as a political issue that might lose the Liberals their support in Quebec. But still nothing looks certain about the fair ever opening at all. Although Pearson has indicated he will brook no delay, his advisers may yet change his mind.

This is no laughing matter. The prestige of the country is involved in the circus on the St. Lawrence. Up to now, within Canada, people have talked about the "Montreal fair," and although Ottawa and all the provinces have agreed to participate, Canadians outside Quebec have little knowledge about the project and less enthusiasm.

But it was Canada not Montreal, that applied successfully for the fair to the International Bureau of Exhibitions in Paris. If the fair flops, the flop will be what the world remembers about Canada in 1967.

Every Canadian taxpayer, through the federal government, has already started to put money into Expo '67. Artificial islands are taking shape in the middle of the St. Lawrence River, the nucleus of a two-thousand-acre expanse of island-and-river fairground that could be the most spectacular exhibition site in history. The project has made a shaky start. The first commissioner general of the fair and his deputy have resigned because of bickering and power plays by governments. Here, and on the next four pages is a report on what's gone wrong — and right — thus far, and how Canadian cartoonists envision the fair in 1967.



Cartoonist Jeff Chapleau draws opening day—as it may look if some extraordinary measures aren't taken soon.

continued overleaf



# WORLD'S FAIR

continued

The cost:

## MORE THAN THE SEAWAY

How the fair's price tag has risen from \$40 million to more than \$600 million

NO MATTER HOW MUCH CASH Canada's 1967 world's fair gets, it seems to howl for more. Its original price tag was forty million dollars. To meet it, John Diefenbaker's government pledged twenty million dollars. Premier Jean Lesage in Quebec pledged fifteen million dollars. The city of Montreal pledged five million dollars. No world's fair in history had started with such a magnificent pot. But by this August, the estimated cost had reached six hundred million dollars. The federal government had raised its ante to seventy million dollars. Montreal was frowning over site-development costs of more than ten million dollars. The provincial government was trying to figure out how it would find one hundred million dollars for its share of a \$175 million expressway to the site of the exhibition.

The six hundred million dollar figure includes all government and private investment related to the fair. But all of it, with the exception of about seventy-five million dollars to be spent by foreign exhibitors, will have to come from Canada — more than five hundred million dollars. The St. Lawrence

Seaway cost Canada and the United States only \$458 million.

These new facts about cost have come to light at a bad time. The city of Montreal has been borrowing heavily in the past year to finance its \$188 million subway. The Paris-style "metro" was supposed to cost \$132 million but an under-river extension to the site of the fair and the South Shore mainland have upped the price. Expo '67 officials have told Mayor Drapeau flatly that no subway in 1967 means no fair. The quarter-mile steel bridge — another eight million dollars — which will link the island site to Montreal harbor won't be able to handle the estimated four hundred thousand visitors a day.

Taxpayers in other parts of Canada have already started grumbling about contributions to the "Montreal fair." The *Toronto Globe and Mail* has said that "Canada cannot be expected to underwrite wild extravagances — Canada cannot be expected to provide to Quebec, under the guise of fair costs, services which Quebec should provide for itself."

The amount required for the fair is so large that Expo planners have hired economists to calculate its effect on the national and local economy. What happens when you inject six hundred million dollars

into a single city in less than four years? What happens to interest rates in New York when three governments in Canada, civic, provincial and federal, are trying to borrow money for fair expenses? In particular, what will happen to Montreal in 1968? After the ball is over, how do you avoid a slump?

Men may turn out to be an even bigger problem than money. The world's fair corporation has discovered that the layer of executive talent in Canada is thin indeed and even thinner when you look for bilingual executives. As a result, a number of top jobs in the corporation are held by retired executives who might not even be around in 1967. The bilingual character of the corporation has forced it to recruit most of its employees within the borders of Quebec. And to add to the problem, the two top men hired first, Commissioner-General Paul Bienvenu and his deputy C. F. Carsley, have both walked out in a huff over politics.

By Oct. 1, 1965, when the fair is scheduled to move into the construction phase, men at every level will be in short supply. Contractors building Canadian and foreign pavilions on the site will be bidding for labor against others involved in vast highway, hotel, motel and apartment-block construction in the region. The new headquarters of Radio-Canada (the CBC) in east-end Montreal, not to mention the subway, will soak up hundreds of building workers.

One of the first outside consultants hired by the corporation to draw up a timetable came back with a somewhat discouraging report. He announced that the fair could easily open — in 1969. The schedule was based on times normally required for large government projects. "Nothing but extraordinary measures will get the fair in shape by the spring of 1967," says Claude Robillard, its director of planning.

One extraordinary measure already taken has been the hiring of a thirty-one-year-old French Canadian named Maurice Houle as a

"scientific management consultant." Houle is drawing up a complete "electronic timetable" of all work involved in the exhibition, using "critical path" planning pioneered by U. S. navy experts building Polaris missiles and nuclear submarines. He has already gathered a detailed computer-card dossier on the exhibition. When these cards are fed into computers, the result is a complete picture of work in progress and warnings about "critical deadlines." So far, Houle has discovered no fewer than fifteen thousand distinct "tasks" which have to be finished before the fair opens in forty-two months. He won't say how many have been finished by now.

## The competition:

The States may have two "world's fairs" almost at the same time as Canada's

ON THE SURFACE, planners of Expo '67 have a holier-than-them attitude to what is happening on 646 acres of Flushing Meadows Park, where the New York World's Fair will open in April 1964 for a two-year run. Apart from being "commercial," they point out, the New York Fair is not even recognized by the International Bureau of Exhibitions, which does recognize Montreal's.

But their loftiness fails to hide some annoyance. If the Americans were among the thirty nations belonging to the IBE, they could be competed with evenly. But as it is, any American any time can decide to hold a "world's fair" and damn the competition. There are now reports that the city of Long Beach, Calif., is planning a four hundred million dollar "world's



As our biggest centennial event, the fair is gambling our national prestige.