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Maine

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SEP 8 1967

By Keller

Maine

By Earle Doucette

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/ Canada's Expo 67, which will close its doors this fall, will go down in history as by far the most successful event of its kind ever presented. This is no mean feat, because in doing so a relatively small county has outstripped the richest and most powerful nations in the world, including the United States, that have staged similar expositions in the past.

In Maine, where we have two Canadian Provinces as neighbors and another just offshore, we perhaps have stronger ties with the fine nation to the north than any other state, and so there is no one who rejoices more in Canada's success.

In deciding to undertake the staging of a World's Fair, Canadians took on a mighty venture, one that many outside of that country predicted would be doomed to failure.

Montreal is not exactly next door to the big population centers of the continent, it was pointed out, and there were predictions that attendance would fall far below even the most cautious estimates. For that and other reasons, not many countries would make the expensive investment necessary to have pavilions there. Away from big media centers, coverage of Expo 67 would be relatively sparse.

All of those gloomy predictions went by the board. More countries exhibited than at any similar event in the past. Coverage by newspapers, magazines, television and radio was not only profuse but ecstatic. Persons from deep in the United States who had never visited Canada grasped this as an opportunity to do so.

No event of the kind ever clears expenses, and Expo 67 probably won't be any exception. But it has been a promotional event worth tens of millions of dollars.

So far as Maine is concerned, it may well turn out, after final evaluations have been made, that our part in Expo 67 was the most successful promotional venture in our history.

When our building for the event was fashioned there was scattered criticism because it followed conventional concepts instead of wandering off into the wild blue yonder of space age construction. As it turned out, however, we did exactly the right thing. Because of our modest investment, we couldn't be as expansive or as elaborate as the big exhibitors, but we could be different--and we were just

that. The warmth and friendliness of the Maine building projected just the sort of favorable image we set out to establish.

Prior to the opening of Expo 67 the Maine Department of Economic Development, in common with other travel-oriented agencies in the state, predicted that we would gain greatly by inducing people to travel through Maine coming or going to the Fair, or both, even though it is not the most direct route. As it turned out, that prediction was on the modest side. In a year when our travel business needs a boost because of our unseasonable boast.

Maine was one of only a few states that showed faith in our Canadian neighbor by having a building at the event. Surely if it was a bread cast upon the waters that has returned many fold in more guises than one.