

# IN THE WORLD'S SHOWCASE

## Mounting a Public ACV Service at EXPO '67

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EXPO '67 is an abbreviation for the international exposition taking place between April and October in Montreal this year to mark the centenary of the Canadian Confederation. Expo is very large and very North American but with a much more international flavour than the much criticised New York World's Fair held in 1964-65. The Canadian Federal Government makes no secret of the fact that when it is all over, if it is only \$95 million out of pocket, it'll be very happy!

Britain is represented strongly, with a national pavilion which, one suspects, may contain a steam engine or two—for old times' sake.

One thing that is a must from Britain is the hovercraft. It was suggested by various Whitehall departments and the manufacturers that one of the pioneer British operators should investigate the possibility of operating the latest machines as a public service at Expo. Chaps in sponge-bag trousers said all the usual things like "Make it

as spectacular as you can without actually asking us for money." The argument advanced in this instance was that no government money was ever spent promoting British razor blades abroad. Yes, incredibly—that is what the man said!

A survey of the Expo area of Montreal was finally made in August 1966. By this time a new island of three or four square miles had been created from two much smaller areas in the middle of the St Lawrence. The old railway sorting sidings and goods yard, complete, had been pulled up to make way for ferro-concrete stadia, pavilions, and all the other futuristic baubles of a world fair.

The main problem which arose was the high cost of building hovercraft landing points in Expo which would be of little or no value after Expo closed at the end of October—just 184 days from the start.

Of the two sites available, one was 18ft above river level and the other had about six feet of water covering

it. On the plus side it was estimated that no less than 36 million people would be attending Expo—reading the small print this was 12,000,000 attending for three days each—including an estimated 5,000,000 from south of the border. In a nutshell, this meant that at an economical fare three-quarters of one per cent of the "gate" had to be carried to break even at a 55% payload. With 69 nations exhibiting, and more than 40 heads of state expected, this, from the national point of view, was something that the British ACV industry, with a brand-new means of transport to sell, just could not afford to miss.

After Hoverwork had taken the decision to have a go, both the NRDC and BHC rallied around and agreed to underwrite part of the cost of the operation. This gesture made it pos-

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A map of Hoverwork Canada's Montreal operation. The third point in the network is a road/river interchange some miles downstream. Fares between the bank and the island exhibition site, and around one of the two islands, will be \$2

