

Douglas Cardinal's threatened vision

Budget woes plague Ottawa's National Museum of Man

Douglas Cardinal has a vision of the National Museum of Man, having been chosen two years ago to design a new repository for the country's two million artefacts. "It looks as though the building almost grew out of the ground, but it is also an exciting and dynamic place for people to work and live in and to view the heritage of Canada in," says the Edmonton-based Metis architect. His five-storey, 740,000-square-foot structure is beginning to take shape on the banks of the Ottawa River in Hull, Quebec, across from Canada's parliament buildings. Mr. Cardinal, 51, renowned for the distinctive curvilinear designs of such buildings as St. Mary's Catholic Church in Red Deer, Grande Prairie Regional College and the Edmonton Space Sciences Centre, speaks in near-mystical terms of what he calls "the greatest project to work on this century in Canada, if not the world," an endeavour which currently consumes nearly all of his waking hours, as well as those of the team of 10 Edmonton architects he brought to Ottawa in early May. "We're expressing our goals and aspirations in building art, the same thing as the Greeks did with their buildings," he proclaims. "I will not compromise." Unfortunately, that it exactly what he is being asked to do.

To mystics and those who live in a realm of pure, unfettered imagination, compromise may be a dirty word. But architects work in a world of budgets, bureaucracies and bottom lines, as Mr. Cardinal and his colleague Moshe Safdie are learning all too well. Israeli-born, Montreal-based architect Safdie, famous for Expo '67's "Habitat" residential complex, is concurrently designing the National Gallery in Ottawa. Construction of each of the projects, which began 1½ years ago, was originally budgeted at \$80 million and scheduled to be completed by December 1986. Both are now six months behind schedule and will come in about 15% over budget unless modifications are made. Meanwhile, the Canada Museums

Construction Corporation (CMCC), created by Liberal Communications Minister Francis Fox in June 1982 to oversee construction of the museum and the gallery, is being phased out and responsibility for the projects shifted to the dollars-and-sense Department of Public Works.

According to Mr. Cardinal and Jean Sutherland Boggs, who was relieved of her position as CMCC chairman May 16 and who now serves as "special adviser" to Communications Minister Marcel Masse, the government realized early on that the buildings would cost \$92 million each to complete. Thus the corporation

imum adjustment to his design concept, but we do have a limited budget," observes deputy minister of public works Arthur Wilson, who is overseeing the day-to-day operations of the CMCC while winding it down. Mr. Wilson says the broad plan is to complete the exteriors of both the museum and the gallery but defer finishing one-third of the interiors until more money is found. He admits, however, that "deferrals have a bad habit of turning into cuts." Still, for the time being "we're trying to avoid major architectural changes. We're not lopping off things like wings." The department is also trying to use cheaper fixtures and finishes—linoleum or concrete floors, say, rather than granite, or brick exteriors instead of stone.

Mr. Cardinal says he understands and sympathizes with the government's desire to keep costs down. He is attempting to co-operate by designing the building so that inexpensive materials can be used now and better ones added later. For example, if the drywalling used now has the proper backing, more attractive panelling can be installed later. But some proposed cost-cutting measures are not acceptable. One is a "suggestion that we take the skylighting out of the galleries. That is something I think is disastrous and not a serious consideration." There has

even been a proposal to straighten out Mr. Cardinal's trademark curves, which require more elaborate engineering than conventional right angles. "Of course that is the signature of my architecture and I can't even consider it. If the design is altered beyond my professional integrity, then I am not the architect and I will not identify myself with the project." But while "anything can happen," Mr. Cardinal intends to do his utmost to preserve his vision of a national monument. Says he: "The building will be done right as long as I'm the architect of the National Museum of Man."

Adam Singer



Architect Cardinal on the site

Even a suggestion to dispense with the trademark curves.

was authorized in the closing days of the Trudeau government to seek additional funding from the private sector. No serious private-sector fund-raising efforts were made, however. Upon taking office last fall, the government of Brian Mulroney decided not to seek additional money because of opposition from provincial culture ministers and the Canadian Museums Association, who feared such a campaign for the two federal landmarks would cripple their own fund-raising efforts.

The question now is whether, or how far, Mr. Cardinal's vision will have to be altered. "We would like to see the min-

The Weekly Newsmagazine

AR This Week

Although the magazine market has recently been problematic for most and an outright disaster for some, *Alberta Report* continues to break new ground. Figures for the past 12 months released this week by the Print Measurement Bureau in Toronto, calculating the average total readership per issue of each participating magazine, found *AR*'s audience has increased a whopping 23% over 1984. Average weekly readership now stands at 395,000, or one in every five

Albertans aged 12 and older.

The PMB data provide a very detailed description of any magazine's following, and *AR*'s would suit almost any advertiser. Roughly one-third of the people we reach each week are women. Fully one-quarter describe themselves as management executives or professionals. Almost one-third list their annual household income as \$35,000 or more.

Readership of other newsmagazines in Alberta levelled off in the past 12 months. *Time* continued to attract a total audience of 241,000, *Maclean's* 239,000. As for the free-distribution lifestyle magazines, *Edmonton* recorded a total of

71,000 per month, *Calgary* attracted 60,000, and the Alberta edition of *Western Living* slid to 122,000 readers per month from 151,000 last year.

"It just goes to show," remarked *AR* advertising manager Gary Fach, "that if you want to reach the Alberta market you have to be in our magazine. No one else can do it as well."



Adman Fach

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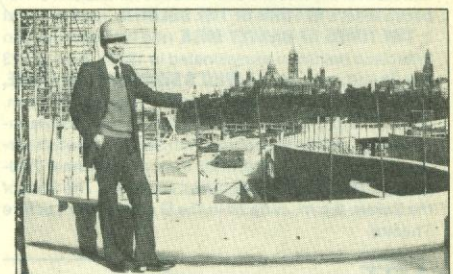
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The Cover—Premier Peter Lougheed and Education Minister David King get tough



Arts—Architect Douglas Cardinal fights to preserve a pure design



Business—CCB president Gerald McLaughlan counterattacks critics