

Sinking museum refloated on B.C. dollars

The Maritime Museum has been rescued by the provincial government.

At a special meeting of the general membership Tuesday night, the museum's board of trustees withdrew its previous recommendation that the museum close Dec. 31.

The meeting was originally called to discuss closure, but trustees received a letter from Provincial Secretary Ernest Hall Tuesday after-

noon offering a \$15,000 grant for January through March. Hall also guaranteed provincial support required before the museum can receive a \$25,000 grant from the federal government.

The letter suggested that talks continue among governments to determine the museum's future.

The trustees' decision to avoid financial disaster and shut the museum's doors was

precipitated by an eviction notice from the city of Victoria effective March 31, 1975, board chairman R. W. Sandiland said.

The museum is located in the Law Courts Building in Bastion Square.

Victoria has been suggesting since March, 1973, the museum move to the Malahat Building on Wharf, Sandiland told the gathering of about 75 members.

But that building is too small to hold the museum's collection and would be much too expensive to enlarge, he said.

The \$15,000 grant does not solve all the museum's problems, Sandiland warned.

He likened the museum to a drowning man coming up for the third time. He hoped that, this time, a permanent home and a permanent solution to the museum's financial problems will be found.

Sandiland dismissed the possibility of a takeover of the Maritime Museum by the Provincial Museum. Hall had indicated in earlier meetings that the Maritime Museum should remain "a separate entity," Sandiland said.

Museum society members at the meeting unanimously decided to tell the city they are "absolutely convinced the Old Court House is the most appropriate building under present circumstances" for the museum.

Sandiland also announced that, to convince municipal governments of the museum's public support, a campaign will be launched to raise \$50,000 in pledges.

Blayne Scott, campaign organizer, emphasized that the funds would go to the museum's capital, not operating budget, because museum trustees are insisting on stable support from governments.

"We can't operate museums as enterprises that sink or swim on the day's take," he said.