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After years of financial fickleness, the Maritime Museum has found a steady beau

By GORDON MESLEY

It now appears, after years of insecurity and bickering, that a valued and underrated British Columbia institution has finally found a secure future. The Maritime Museum of British Columbia is now the sole responsibility of the provincial government, according to Victoria Mayor Mike D.W. Young.

The transfer of responsibility for the Maritime Museum came about when the province agreed to take over the ownership of the Bastion Building, which houses the Museum. Contracts are now being written, and the official act will occur sometime this spring.

Mayor Young, and officials in the office of the Provincial Secretary, Mrs. Grace McCarthy (whose portfolio includes responsibility for museums) confirmed the agreement has been reached, although exact details are still being worked out.

The Victoria City Council approved the transfer of ownership from the city to the province on Jan. 26, for a price of one dollar, and other considerations.

Mrs. McCarthy is expected to call a news conference sometime in the next few weeks to outline her department's plans for the building and the Museum.

According to Mayor Young, the province must upgrade the building to meet current security, fire and safety standards. Just when, is somewhat vague; but in any event, if the Maritime Museum is ever moved, then the upgrading must be done immediately.

A spokesman in the Provincial Secretary's office said there are plans being developed, to "repair, to spend money, and get some programmes going."

Why has all of this happened?

It seems both the city and the province have finally moved to accept their full and separate responsibilities to the Maritime Museum, which has the best collection of nautical artifacts on the Pacific Coast.

Mayor Young said the city could not afford to upgrade the Bastion Building and give the Museum the encouragement in funding that it sorely needs.

"Rather than have a ping-pong game between the city and the province, we gave them the building. The Museum is a regional and provincial institution and responsibility.

"We felt a responsibility, and had grave doubts about the security and general condition of the building. We could not afford it," he said.

The province, under the agreement now being worked out in detail, has agreed to accept responsibility for the location of the Museum even if it is moved out of the present Bastion Square quarters, according to Young.

"In exchange for them assuming responsibility for the Maritime Museum, we gave them the building," he explained.

This Museum is the home of one of the finest collections of marine artifacts in the world. It is unrivaled on the Pacific West Coast—either by the popular (and prosperous) San Francisco Maritime staff. There have not been the facilities or the Vancouver Maritime Museum, protected as it is by its parent, the Centennial Museum of the City of Vancouver.

The Victoria-based institution has an inventory of material seldom seen by anyone other than the Museum, which is such a crowd pleaser, or the budget to permit its display.

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