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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 September 1986

CDP 12/9.

Dear Charles,

British Day at Expo '86

/ I enclose a despatch by Sir Derek Day reporting  
/ on the Prime Minister's visit to Expo '86. I also  
attach a copy of the report prepared jointly by  
the Consul General in Vancouver and the Commissioner  
General of the British Pavilion which is referred  
to and was enclosed with the despatch.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
No 10 Downing St





## BRITISH DAY AT EXPO '86

## S U M M A R Y

1. British Day celebrated on July 12, with the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher as Guests of Honour. The Prime Minister's presence ensured the success of the occasion. A full and tiring day. (Paras 1-4.)
2. Primary objective to sell Britain and demonstrate our capabilities in fields of transport and communications. British Pavilion at EXPO and related activities concentrated on that theme. Store promotions in Vancouver and elsewhere in Canada. (Paras. 5-7.)
3. Many British cultural attractions: Royal Ballet to Cambridge Buskers. Much credit due to the British Council. (Paras 8-9.)
4. A political dividend. Britain put firmly on the map in Western Canada. (Para. 10.)
5. Financial concerns. Need to supplement official funds with contributions from local commercial organisations. A lesson for the future. (Para. 11.)
6. Despite some apprehensions, a great day for Britain, thanks to the Prime Minister. (Para. 12.)



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BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION  
80 ELGIN STREET  
OTTAWA K1P 5K7

25 August 1986

The Rt Honourable Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC MP  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
LONDON

Sir,

BRITISH DAY AT EXPO '86

1. I have the honour to enclose a detailed report, prepared jointly by the Commissioner General of the British Pavilion at EXPO '86, Mr Allan, and the Consul-General in Vancouver, Mr Stephenson, on the British Day at EXPO '86 and on the associated events of the British Week in Vancouver. Mr Allan will be reporting more fully on British participation in EXPO '86 on the conclusion of the Exhibition.

2. Each participating country in EXPO '86 was allocated a National Day, during which the focus of attention would be directed at that particular country. The National Day ceremonies inevitably became something of a political and commercial competition between the participating governments. Our objective was to ensure that our Day equalled, and preferably excelled, that of others.

3. The main interest in respect of our National Day was the identity of the Guest of Honour who would represent the United Kingdom. The EXPO authorities, the Government of British Columbia and the Federal Government all hoped that the Prime Minister would, herself, be able to attend. That this, eventually, proved possible, gave enormous pleasure and

/satisfaction





satisfaction to all concerned. Mrs Thatcher's presence, together with Mr Thatcher, ensured that the British Day would be one of the highlights of EXPO '86.

4. The timing of our National Day, July 12, was far from ideal in British parliamentary terms. (One lesson to be learned for Brisbane is that the date of our National Day should be geared to the convenience of our Guest of Honour rather than the other way round.) The fact that, nevertheless, the Prime Minister was prepared to travel to Vancouver for a 36 hour visit, undertake a punishing schedule (for which I apologise) running from early morning to after midnight, followed by a 6 am departure the following day, made a tremendous impact. Mrs Thatcher's reputation for stamina and endurance had preceded her. But even her staunchest admirers, and as her visit demonstrated, they are numerous in British Columbia, were astonished at the pace maintained throughout the day. There is no doubt that the publicity given to British Day, the interest it attracted and the lasting effect that it has produced, could not have been achieved without the Prime Minister's presence.

5. We had a number of objectives for the British Day and the associated events of the British Week. The first was straightforwardly commercial. We wanted to sell Britain. Indeed, the Prime Minister's first engagement in Vancouver was with a group of leading Canadian businessmen and bankers, some

/of





of whom had flown from Montreal, Toronto or Calgary specifically for this meeting. They were given a clear message of our desire and determination to increase trade and investment between the UK and Canada. From a number of remarks made subsequently to me, the message got home.

6. At EXPO itself, we sought to demonstrate what we had to offer in the field of transport and communications, the two themes of EXPO '86. Our Pavilion on the EXPO site, demonstrations, off-site, of the British Rail Railbus and a Leyland double-decker, passenger services by British Hovercraft and a stunning fly-past by Concorde, were all geared to this objective. These activities were supported by a series of store promotions throughout Vancouver promoting a wide range of British goods from Jaguar cars to non-alcoholic beer. Full details are given in the enclosed report. The focus of much of this activity was a large shopping mall in Vancouver which the Prime Minister visited as part of her programme. A number of the larger stores had mounted special displays of British goods and others, caught up by the atmosphere, joined in the chorus. Even the Italian Ice-Cream Parlour was bedecked with Union Jacks for Mrs Thatcher's visit.

7. We will never know, for certain, how much additional trade can be attributed to our commercial efforts at EXPO '86. We do know that some \$Canadian 5 million of additional

/supplies





supplies have been ordered from the UK to support the special promotions in Vancouver and elsewhere in Canada in 1986. I do know that one of the Provincial Ministers in British Columbia earmarked for himself the Jaguar Cabriolet on show in our Pavilion. The President of Royal Doulton Canada has told me that his sales, in Vancouver, were doing particularly well during the British Week. There is thus good reason to believe that we have had some success in meeting our commercial objective.

8. The British Day also provided an opportunity to demonstrate the significant contribution Britain continues to make to the arts, in all its forms. The EXPO World Festival ~~attracted companies~~ and individual artists from around the world. The British Week was timed to coincide with the appearance in Vancouver of the Royal Ballet, whose five performances were a sell-out. The Ballet also paid Vancouver the compliment of performing, on British Day, the World Premiere of a new ballet by David Bintley, in the presence of the Prime Minister and HRH The Princess Margaret, whose visit to Canada happened to coincide with the British Day. Though the most significant, the Royal Ballet was only one of numerous British attractions in Vancouver. The Band of the 1st Battalion of The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, the world champion Strathclyde Police Pipe Band, the Northcliffe School Swing Band, and the Fron Choir, gave performances

/throughout





throughout Vancouver, and combined to give stirring and colourful presentations at our National Day ceremony at the EXPO site. The Cambridge Buskers, Welfare State International and other entertainers, appeared on the various stages around the EXPO site. No one at EXPO that week could have been in any doubt that Britain still stands for excellence and originality in the arts.

9. Much of the credit for assembling such a lively and comprehensive representation of what Britain has to offer must go to the British Council. By persuasion, some cajoling and limited financial assistance, they helped to put together a programme of which we could be proud.

10. Our third objective was political. We wanted firstly to demonstrate that Britain still attaches importance to its relationship with Canada, and secondly to indicate that Canada would be unwise to turn its back on the UK and the rest of Europe in its quest for an Eldorado in the Pacific Rim. In this respect, we enjoyed certain built-in advantages. EXPO was, after all, being held in British Columbia. Sentiment towards the UK is probably stronger in Vancouver and the Provincial Capital, Victoria, than anywhere else in Canada. Furthermore, the British Columbia Government has much sympathy and admiration for the economic policies of Her Majesty's Government. The British Day and the Prime Minister's presence provided a timely opportunity,

/as





as Mrs Thatcher put it in her speech, to put Britain back upon the map of Vancouver and British Columbia.

11. One lesson that emerged clearly from the planning of the British Day is that the financial provision made by HMG for our participation in EXPO '86 was, in itself, inadequate to meet our requirements. The Commissioner General and the Consul-General were thus obliged to expend considerable effort and draw upon local goodwill to find the necessary finance for a number of events and activities. We had to prevail upon the Canadian branches of Barclays Bank, Grosvenor Estates and Jaguar to sponsor, in part, the Royal Ballet performances. British Airways, Royal Doulton and others provided funds so that we could make some necessary embellishments to our Pavilion. One of the Canadian supermarket chains helped to sponsor the performances of Welfare State International and subsidised much of our written publicity. We even had to go, cap in hand, to local representatives of British companies to meet some of the costs of the band of The Queen's Lancashire Regiment. Had this outside support not been forthcoming, the impact of our overall presence at EXPO and the success of the British Day would have been in doubt. This is something that must be taken into account when considering our financial contribution to similar events in the future.

12. Finally, I must confess to some apprehension before the event. So much depended upon circumstances beyond our  
/control.





control. A bad day would have dampened everyone's spirits: in the event, the weather was fine. South Africa or Northern Ireland could have provoked demonstrations: nothing untoward happened. Rivalries between the EXPO, Provincial and Federal authorities could have led to crossed wires: these, though present, were not evident. Thanks to the untiring efforts of many people, British and Canadian, in the UK and Canada, and to the enthusiasm and energy of the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher, July 12 was a great day for Britain.

13. I am copying this despatch (without enclosure) to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Director-General of the Central Office of Information, the UK Commissioner General for EXPO '86 and the Consul-General in Vancouver. I am also sending a copy (with Brisbane 1988 in mind) to the High Commissioner in Canberra.

I am Sir

Yours faithfully,

*Derek Day*

DEREK DAY



## THE BRITISH DAY AT EXPO '86

- 1 Each nation participating at Expo '86 is allocated a National Day, and inevitably competition has grown between participants on the quality of their presentations. It is pleasing to note that the British Day was judged to have outclassed the opposition. Given the slenderness of our resources in money and manpower this is something of an achievement: but then the same must be said about the British Pavilion and the supporting programme of events which we have been able to put together in Vancouver. Looking back over the months of preparation it seems to me to be a considerable achievement on the part of the whole of the team involved in getting the act together.

It may also be worth noting that the British Day is traditionally held at exhibitions on the 6th June: this was the date on which we at first settled. As events transpired, it became clear that if we were to have some sort of cultural contribution to our day the Royal Ballet visit, which had been established for a number of months as taking place from 8 - 13 July, seemed to be an attractive alternative. We then switched to the 8th July: but the Prime Minister's diary commitments eventually narrowed down the choice to the 12th July. As it turned out from a number of points of view it was a wise choice, despite the other political significance of the 12th July. Of the advantages, not least was the fact that the day was fine - a factor which those not familiar with Vancouver might find surprising. Many national days have suffered from torrential rain and the fact that we escaped this was something to be thankful about.

- 2 The most important component of our British Day - by far - was the presence of the Prime Minister. All the anxious weeks of preparation and doubts were swept away by the warmth of her welcome in Vancouver and by the energy and enthusiasm which she herself put into the visit during a day that was crowded with events from 8 a.m until after midnight the following day.
3. The planning for the British Day was done by a team that stretched from Vancouver to London. The detailed work for the visit to the City was done at the Consulate General (where particular mention must be made of the excellent contribution of Nigel Adams) and at the British Pavilion, where Frank Watts played a first-rate co-ordinating role. Many other people made a contribution, as is witnessed by the large number of letters of thanks which have now been sent out. The co-ordination of the visit as a whole was implemented in Ottawa. A point on which it is worth commenting is the difficulty in communications: these were at times frustrating. The main reason seemed to be the slow process in decision making, which was perhaps inevitable given the sensitivity of many of the issues connected with the Prime Minister's visit. Nevertheless, the absence of secure or speedy communications into Vancouver was an irritant. Had the High Commission had access to a facsimile transmission machine it would have been a lot easier to settle programme details more quickly and with greater economy. It may be worth considering whether the installation of this type of equipment at posts could not prove to be of benefit.

The High Commission, Consulate General, and British Pavilion relationships were always harmonious and productive. It is difficult to do other than commend the whole team involved, but from my personal point of view as Commissioner-General I would commend Miss Mary Stephenson whose ability to deal with several matters simultaneously seemed remarkable. Mention should also be made of the visit made by Mr Dennis Dyer of COI London who strengthened our small team during his



10 day visit from the UK and of local volunteers such as Mrs Ann Roberts who gave generously of their time.

- 4 The British "Day" at Expo was a focal point for a British "Week", which will be the subject of a separate report by the Consul-General in so far as it was concerned with commercial activities. But the whole week hung together effectively and gave Britain a notable and timely boost: the BOTB and British Council contributions to the team effort were of great value. The latter included not only the Royal Ballet, but a number of on-site entertainments such as the Cambridge Buskers which added a distinctly British flavour to the Vancouver scene.

From the Opening ceremony of the British Week on the steps of the Art Gallery (Ap. 1) by the High Commissioner to the closing ceremonies of the Scottish Festival on 13 July there can be few people in Vancouver that were not aware the British were here. A full programme of the British week is attached at Appendix 2 on which it will be seen that the slender resources at our disposal were put to extensive use with the QLR bandsmen and Strathclyde pipes and drums being rushed back and forth between appointments - the Leyland bus demonstration being effectively pressed into service.

Mention must also be made of the large number of VIP visitors who chose to come to Vancouver at this period and who at times placed a very real strain on our resources. At any other time they would have been welcome visitors and if they had less than their fair share of assistance they accepted the situation with patience. The fact that we were able to divert the House of Commons Transport Committee away from the scene until Monday 14 July helped (although by then the team here was showing signs of exhaustion). But the visit, which although welcome, caused most difficulty was that of HRH Princess Margaret. The planning for this parallel visit largely fell on our Canadian friends, but inevitably there were points of overlap of which the most notable was the visit by HRH to the Royal Ballet performance on 12 July in her capacity as President of the Ballet. I attach at Appendix 3 a list of the daily visitors during the period of and surrounding the British Week.

- 5 The programme for the British Day (as eventually agreed) is attached, Appendix 4. The numerous additions were made more bearable by the installation in the Consulate General of a word processor, but even so the expenditure of prodigious amounts of overtime were necessary by the team. We were ably assisted by the Canadian Federal and Provincial Co-ordinators (David Dunlop and David Harris) and by the Expo team led by Commissioner General Patrick Reid and his Deputy responsible for Protocol Richard Noyes Roberts.
- 6 The component parts of the British Day
  - a) Before the Prime Minister's visit a thorough cleaning and repainting programme was carried out on the Pavilion under the control of the Pavilion Director John Marshall. Of equal importance was the installation of a number of imaginative features which had been eliminated due to budgetary problems in the early construction phase. These should never have been left out and it is pleasing to note that some of the duller areas of the Pavilion have now taken on a better significance for the visitors. Not least of these was the installation of caption material as a means of entertaining the queues which now are becoming a regular feature of the Pavilion. The Pavilion's 1.5



millionth visitor was received shortly before the Prime Minister's visit, the presentation of a Royal Doulton figure (Donated by the Company) to the lucky visitor being made by the High Commissioner and Lady Day.

During her visit the Prime Minister expressed appreciation of the quality of the Pavilion and in particular the fact that it was export related. She asked the names of Companies which had been particularly helpful - as well as those who had been unhelpful. A number of presentations were made to the Prime Minister of Pavilion staff and of representatives of British Industry (see Appendix 5). The arrival of the Prime Minister at 9.30 a.m before normal Expo operating hours however enabled us to tightly control the number of those in the building. This in turn enabled better control of the journalists and photographers who created little trouble despite their enthusiasm.

The Prime Minister signed the visitors book in the Concorde lounge where she was also able to see a photographic display featuring other events during British Week.

- b) Due to the generosity of Bellway Marine Ltd the Prime Minister was able to present a Sunbird Sailing Craft for the Disabled to Mayor Harcourt of Vancouver on behalf of the Rick Hansen Man in Motion Campaign. Chris Samis, a young disabled man, was also involved in the ceremony as a representative of Rick Hansen.
- c) The Prime Minister's visit to EC Pavilion was of a very short duration. She was able nonetheless to meet the European Commissioners General and to discuss the Euro-Tunnel exhibit with Mr Geuterbock of The Consortium.
- d) The Prime Minister then made a short visit to the Birmingham narrow boat en-route to the motor yacht 'Christabel' (generously provided by Mr Ralph Smith of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club) which enabled her to have a view of Expo from False Creek. This route to the Plaza of Nations became a triumphant procession in which the yacht was escorted by four British built hovercraft (the AP 188, the Griffin Hake and 2 SRN6 Craft of the Canadian Coastguard service): but by far the most dominant feature of this period of the visit was the flypast of Concorde which made 5 low level passes with impeccable timing, providing a spectacle which brought the Expo crowd to its feet. Although finally arranged only at the 11th hour the time we expended on getting this flypast was thoroughly justified: Next to the Prime Minister's visit it is the most talked of event of the National Day Programme.
- e) I attach (appendix 5) a copy of the programme for the National Day ceremony at the Plaza of Nations. This was one of Premier Bennett's last visits, as Premier of B C, to Expo and he was given a good reception. But the loudest applause, and indeed the warmest reception throughout the whole day was reserved for Margaret Thatcher. Her speech (copy attached, Appendix 6) was entirely appropriate to the occasion. Before and after the flag raising ceremony a crowd estimated at 5,500 spectators was entertained by the Band of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment (Mr R Owen), the pipes and drums of the Strathclyde Police (Inspector Wilson) and the combined voices of the Vancouver and Fron male voice choirs. All of these performed splendidly (and the band



of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment are to be particularly congratulated on their willing hard work and skill during the week) but of the musical items the crowd most enthusiastically applauded for the young people of the Northfields Middlesex School band, who played a rousing jazz number.

Combined with Concorde, all of this was great stuff, and even if the Welsh choirs continued to bicker in the background the effect on the audience was all that we had hoped, as is shown by the large number of letters of congratulation that were received. The Prime Minister met representatives of the performing groups after the ceremony.

- f) During a visit to the B C Pavilion the Prime Minister was able to have a short meeting with Premier Bennett, following which a reception and lunch for 250 guests was hosted by Expo Commissioner General Reid. The guest list included a number of British visitors, as well as a cross section of the B C political and business scene. Both Mrs Thatcher and her husband were able to meet many of them during the reception. In fact, it is remarkable that from her early morning meeting with leaders of Canadian Industry until the end of the long day the Prime Minister was able to meet a wide variety of Canadians, many of whom expressed surprise at the seeming informality of the arrangements which says much for the excellence of the security planning.
- g) The Canadian Pavilion was the first port of call following lunch. Here, Mrs Thatcher clearly enjoyed her visit which was conducted by the Canadian Commissioner General, Mr Bruce Howe. This was the only point during the day when we were unable to stick reasonably close to the allocated time but the evident delight (as witnessed by press and TV cameras as well as by an audience of some hundreds) with which Mrs Thatcher piloted the Hystar lighter-than-air exhibit made the lapse acceptable.
- h) The Prime Minister then left by motorcade for the Oakridge Shopping Mall where (Appendix 7) she visited a number of shops displaying British goods. Here again the bands provided background music (see Mr Stephenson's appendices on this visit and on the early morning meeting with Canadian business men). On returning from Oakridge the Prime Minister stopped at the Via Rail Station where she inspected and drove the BR Railbus which had been removed for the day from its trial service on the New Westminster - Abbotsford railway line. A number of Canadian Railway personalities were presented by Sir Robert Reid, Chairman of British Rail. The Prime Minister also travelled on the Leyland double decker bus which, as previously mentioned, had been of great value in transporting performers during British Week.
- i) The Press Conference at the Media Centre was, regrettably, dominated by the South Africa issue and the Prime Minister expressed regret that there were few questions related to her Canadian visit.



- j) In the evening the Prime Minister attended a performance by The Royal Ballet, who performed their triple bill, including the world premiere of David Bintley's new work which was loudly applauded, as indeed was the whole performance. The night had a gala air and the attendance by HRH Princess Margaret added to the occasion. The ballet provided an opportunity for inviting a number of prominent Canadians, even if the seating plan for the performance required some masterly juggling of names. So indeed did the arrangements for the two (overlong) intervals, at which the Prime Minister and HRH Princess Margaret mingled with a number of invited guests. The strain on the Prime Minister and her party must by now have been great and an 8 hour time lag must have made for a most tiring evening after a particularly busy day which was not yet finished.
  - k) The post ballet reception which the Prime Minister and Mr Thatcher hosted for 400 guests was an excellent finish to the day. The Prime Minister insisted on meeting the Royal Ballet cast as well as shaking hands with most of those who attended.
- 7 There can be no doubt about the success of the British Day. The press, T V and Radio coverage was first rate. It was gratifying that the Prime Minister mentioned her pleasure at the short visit to Vancouver during a response to a question in the House of Commons two days later. Thanks must finally be expressed to the wide number of those on the British and Canadian side who by careful planning made the visit go smoothly and a memorable one not only for the Prime Minister (as she herself remarked) but indeed for the many thousands who gave her a tremendous welcome on her first visit to the province.