

# Queen's Park boosts year-round Kenora resort area

By CLAIRE HOY  
Star staff writer

MINAKI, Ont. — There is an inscription printed on a University of Pennsylvania's memorial plaque from the class of 1893 that is peculiarly applicable to Ontario's northland today.

It reads: "We will find a way or we will make one."

For many years, the Ontario government has been trying to find a way to make use of this province's majestic north country for year-round—not just summer—recreation.

Now, with the help of 42-year-old businessman Rod Carey, it has decided to make a way instead.

Carey, a cherubic-faced, soft-spoken father of four, is remarkably calm about the big gamble he is taking in opening up his 140-acre Minaki lodge resort to year-round traffic in bush country 30 miles north of Kenora.

"I guess we're just numb to it," he says, "but we have become so attached to this place and it has so

much to offer we simply believe it can't lose."

Carey has made an \$8 million investment here to back up his confidence. The Ontario government thinks the idea of a year-round resort is a good one and is helping Carey with about \$500,000 in grants and loans.

Premier William Davis and Natural Resources Minister Leo Bernier, who is also MPP for this riding, will be here next Friday to officially open the "new" resort.

After that, it will be up to Carey to make it work.

As a summer resort Minaki, an Indian expression meaning "the beautiful country," has stood here since the Canadian National Railways built it in 1927 on a point of land overlooking the Winnipeg River, directly on the route the early voyageurs and fur traders took.

But as a winter resort, it's all new.

Carey, with the help of a \$200,000 federal-provincial grant under the Agriculture

Rehabilitation Act (ARDA) is shaping a spectacular ski hill and chalet from rock and bush country within sight of the main lodge.

In addition, thanks to a \$300,000 Ontario Development Corporation (ODC) loan, the lodge has been winterized to accommodate winter-time customers.

Carey also owns the seven-plane Kenora Airways and Ontario's Transportation and Communications Department is black topping the 3,000-foot runway here so that the lodge will be able to provide a year-round shuttle service for visitors.

The original CNR station, about half a mile from the lodge, will also play a big role in the development. Carey has negotiated a deal with the CNR for charter train service from Winnipeg, a two-hour trip by rail, to bring skiers and families in.

There are a lot of people interested in investing in the Fort Frances, Dryden and Red Lake areas, according to Bernier, and they are watching Minaki with great interest to see if it works.

"If it does, it would broaden the whole recreation industry of the north and give a fantastic boost to our economy."

Bernier sees Minaki as a pilot project that could be expanded to other areas if the winter tourists come. Minaki offers everything a tourist could want for summer living for singles, newlyweds or families—"it could become the honeymoon capital of the north,"

enthused Bernier—fishing, hunting, golf, tennis, volley-

ball, horseback riding, nature trails, boat cruises, swimming, water skiing, speed boating, shuffle board, or simply loafing.

The adventurer can canoe past the lodge on the same trail the voyageurs followed or fish in any of the dozen nearby lakes for walleye, northern pike, bass, perch, lake trout and muskies.

The lodge, which employs 120 people at peak time and plans to have 70 year-round employees, will offer skiing, tobogganing, snowmobiling, skating, ice fishing and supervised children's activities, for the first time this winter.

The 225-foot ski hill, with a chalet at the bottom and a half-mile T-bar that goes up both sides, will have runs to satisfy everyone from the raw beginner to the experienced veteran.

"We've been operating on a 100-day season," Carey said. "By opening up the winter activities we could also open up, the whole economy in this area. We really have confidence. This thing is just so great it can't possibly stay down."

The history of Minaki began in the early 1900s when the CNR was looking for a spot to build resorts for its customers. Designed by the same architect who designed Banff Springs, the original Minaki burned down in 1924, the day before it was supposed to open.

That left the CNR with a \$1 million golf course and no facilities so it set about to rebuild.

The golf course itself, a sporty, scenic par 53 layout, was built with Manitoba soil brought by the trainloads from a farm the CNR

bought at Transeona. It began with rocks, and it took five years of blasting the rock and importing the soil to build it.

In June 1927, the present Minaki lodge opened, accessible only by water.

The lodge offers accommodation for 225 guests.

Carey, born in Morse, Sask., but raised in Moose Jaw, was an engineer in the Navy Fleet Air Arm

then worked at various places such as Uranium City, N.W.T. and Red Deer, Alberta before taking hotel and restaurant administration at Denver University and working for the Hilton Hotel chain, eventually becoming their director of personnel for the West.

In 1965, Carey and two U.S. businessmen bought Manaki lodge from A. T. Hotels of Winnipeg, who

had bought it from the CNR in 1955.

Carey eventually bought out his two American partners and began restoring the lodge, which had been allowed to deteriorate, to its original condition.

"It was obvious that if we were going to make it work we had to make it more accessible," Carey said. "Access has always been a problem."

Now there is the 3,000-foot airstrip, a paved road from Kenora and the old railroad and water routes to bring visitors here.

The lodge paid half the cost of the air strip—and the ski hill and the province paid the other half. Carey has a 20-year lease.

Carey said "the Ontario government certainly took a risk by approving the large loan and added that if Premier Davis had not advanced it "we would have given up on this idea long ago."

The lodge has five-day package plans for \$149, including meals, room and golf. Its daily rates vary from \$8.50 in the motor lodge to \$11 in the grand lodge, with extra charges for singles, half price for children under 12 and no charge for children under three.

## U.S. bank predicts economy speed-up

NEW YORK (UPI) — The Chase Manhattan Bank predicts a dip in the unemployment rate in the next year, an end to "cyclical" housing construction patterns and a slowdown in U.S. farm exports.

Chase economists, in the bank's bi-monthly business letter, said recent evidence indicates that this year "will see the fastest rate of economic growth in more than half a decade."

To support this contention the economists noted that growth is developing "over a broad range of industrial activity," and that business investment "has begun to rise."

They added: "Prospective large increases in investment in both new plants and equipment and inventories, plus the strength that already exists in other sectors, should carry the general economic expansion well into 1973 and quite possibly beyond."

Regarding its belief that

the unemployment situation will improve, the bank cited a defence manpower cutback less severe than those of the past, a reduction in the "abnormal" growth rate of the labor force and accelerated hiring by business.

Chase noted job openings are beginning to increase now that job holders who were on short work-weeks are working longer. The bank said the unemployment rate could have decreased significantly if 2.5 million people had not been added to the work force in the last year.

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