



The culmination of a long-time dream by the late R. J. 'Bob' Muir saw fruition in April, 1955 when Willingdon Arena was officially opened.

## **Willingdon Arena . . . a remarkable community effort**

Powell River's major community project was the building of the Willingdon Arena. Planning began in 1952 by the Powell River Curling and Skating Club and after three years of intensive effort the 130'x220' concrete-block building was officially opened on April 3, 1955, when Mrs. R. J. Muir cut the ribbon stretched across the wide sheet of ice.

It was, indeed, a fitting ceremony because the late R. J. 'Bob' Muir, known as 'Mr. Arena', was a driving force for three years in bringing the arena idea to fruition.

It was, in every sense, a community-wide effort of fund raising and volunteer labor. Ray Raimondo, as chairman of the Special Events committee, inaugurated the Powell River and District Agricultural Society as one of the first fund-raising mediums, sponsoring the Powell River Exhibition, which raised revenue under the overseeing of Brick Jacobson who has held the presidency of the Powell River Curling and Skating Club since 1957, the late Bob Muir having been the first president.

Plays and concerts were staged by the Promotions Committee and a bond drive, headed by Merton Golley sold 300 bonds at \$100 apiece to local supporters.

Clerical work for the bond drive was handled by Chuck Harrison and Terry Hall, Harry Gillis and Art Gamble.

H. I. 'Steve' Stevenson was named chairman of the building committee and Jack Corbett organized student working parties. Volunteer helpers came from all sections of the community and Ab Norman and Chuck Taylor were hired as working foremen to direct the 'do-it-yourself' army.

Fred Anderson, arena director, salvaged materials from the

demolished Jamieson shingle mill on Powell Lake and was also in charge of the lighting installed in the arena by the Powell River Co. electrical department. Jack Dice was a lead hand in electric installation while Frank Trotter looked after the setting up of the public address system.

Vice-president Tommy Wyborn took on the important job of putting in the ice-making plant and the heating and plumbing. Welders from the Powell River Co. under Jack Monteith laid nine miles of pipe without a leak, an exceptional feat according to visiting experts.

With one of the largest indoor ice surfaces in the province the Arena has automatic freezing apparatus costing \$50,000 exclusive of labor. Virtually fireproof the building is solid concrete excepting the roof which rests on eleven huge tresses with not a pillar to block spectator view.

The job of pouring the floor, called 'Operatoin F', brought out 130 men, women and students who poured 1772 bags of cement, making 220 yards of concrete to cover 17,100 square feet in 20 hours. Some 30,000 lbs. of granite chips were put on the wet surface and later ground and polished.

So many volunteers worked so hard to put Powell River on the map with this huge recreational centre that to list them would fill a book.

Adjacent to picturesque Willingdon Park in Westview, the Willingdon Arena stands, a striking monument to community endeavor.