

OAPO dream closer to reality ¹⁹⁷³

(By L. D. MacLAREN)

A year ago I had a dream — a dream of one day providing a place where all Old Age Pensioners could meet with ample space provided for recreation, dinners, movies or such other activities. It would be a place where all pensioners on the Sunshine Coast could meet in a fun-loving spirit of comradeship and friendly competition.

Such was my dream and now it is to become a reality. In order to do this much thought, planning and negotiation was necessary with three levels of government, federal, provincial and municipal. A committee of ten was necessary so I selected the men best suited to carry out the project whom I believe to be the most capable available.

They are Dick Oliver, chairman; L. D. MacLaren, co-ordinator; Arthur Silvertan, secretary; Phil Stevenson, treasurer and accountant; also Victor Eckstein, James Holt, Oliver Bray, Ernest Reitze, John Thurston, Stan Verhulst and Ald. Winston Robinson. These men will co-operate to make the plan a reality.

It makes me very happy to announce that with all groups, individuals, government departments contacted, the plan has received most enthusiastic approval.

First of all we were fortunate in winning approval from Gibsons council with a grant of 3.7 acres of property which had been set aside as parkland, on an initial five year renewable lease at minimal cost.

The objective is to construct on this triangular land directly north of Franklin Road, bounded by Burns, Cochrane and Trueman Roads a full-size outdoor bowling green plus a building 30 x 60 feet for OAPO meetings, indoor carpet bowling, movies, live shows, dinners, receptions and other recreation uses. The balance of the land will be cleared for a park.

These facilities will be made

available to the public at nominal maintenance costs, so there will be no burden on village taxpayers. The facilities will be made available to the public at the discretion of the executive of Branch 38, OAPO.

Negotiations opened with the New Horizons project and as a result last week I received a cheque for \$10,000 as an initial contribution for land clearing and construction work. The money is now deposited at the bank under the name OAP Recreation Project.

As there are no provisions in the New Horizon grants for constructions, application is being made to the provincial parks board recreation department for a further grant amounting to one third of the cost of our proposed building and equipment.

In order to qualify for this grant it is necessary that the group must be able to show 10 percent of the total cost of the building and equipment. To do this it is proposed we launch a fund-raising campaign by

means of bingos, draws such as a boat and by contributions, group or individual.

Work is now started on the project so contributions will be gratefully received by cheque, money order or cash, by the secretary, Arthur Silvertan, Gibsons, in the name of the Old Age Pensioners Recreation project and acknowledged.

A local architect will draft plans for a 30 x 60 ft. building after which tenders will be called. The building will contain a kitchen, washrooms, storage space, a projection booth and portable stage for live shows or film, plus ample space for recreation and other functions.

All expenditures will be done locally. When this project has been completed I will feel that in my 70 years I have contributed a little to the well-being of the people who need it most, Senior Citizens, those now with us and the thousands who will follow. This is the kick-off so let's get behind it.