

## Canadian National Exposition

by Frank P. Herzog

While permanent casinos are on the horizon for Ontario, Canada, gaming and casinos have been a big industry in the province for some time. Like several other provinces, Ontario has permitted charitable gaming. These "floating" casinos are not permitted to be in any locations for more than three days. The largest operator of the casinos is a partnership between Casino Amusements Canada and BJ Games Inc. Together they operate over 60% of the action in Ontario. Using sophisticated marketing techniques to link and inform players, it is almost as if the casinos never move. Players are given gold player cards similar to comp cards used in U.S. casinos. Patrons are constantly informed of where the action is, and when.

As with most other provinces, Ontario has a large summer fair. Lasting twenty days at the end of August in Toronto, it is called the Canadian National Exposition (C.N.E.). At the C.N.E. is the crown jewel of Ontario gaming, the C.N.E. Casino. Run by Casino Amusements & BJ Games, the casino offers 178 tables of play, featuring blackjack, roulette, mini baccarat, and a variation of blackjack called Rapid Blackjack, a single shoe mini tournament that pits players against each other in a winner take all payoff.

The C.N.E. Casino had an open casual flair, appropriate for the summer fair setting. Plenty of windows allow the summer sun in. The second floor features a preferred players area with tables overlooking the courtyard cafe.

And yes, there are chips! There are Paulson hat and cane chips in \$5, \$25 and \$100 denominations, red, green and black respectively. There are hot stamped diamond chips in yellow for 25 cents and blue for 50 cents. There are no slots, but dollar tokens are used on the tables in lieu of chips. Most of the tokens carry a 1992 mint mark, though there were some minted for 1993. The chips were first introduced at the 1992 C.N.E. Casino. Prior to then, house chips from BJ Games were used. For 1993, a limited edition Chipco chip was issued. Only 2000 chips were issued. The chip is red with a view of the building housing the casino. After ten days into the exposition, it was hard to find many on the tables.

The success of the Chipco issue will likely result in another for 1994. So mark your calendars and try to attend. The C.N.E. is a fun fair that reminds you of the first fair that overwhelmed you as a child. Toronto is a beautiful city on Lake Ontario. The C.N.E. is located right on the water, with Toronto Skydome and the CN Tower nearby.

