

speak of hockey and Team Canada and the role that sport plays in Canada, I can only speak as a spectator, not as a participant, as is the case with many Canadians. But I can share with all members of this House and people throughout the country, the special joy and pride in our national sport. I believe we should give serious consideration to the motion before us today.

● (1720)

I should like to refer to the Report of the Task Force on Sports for Canadians issued on February 28, 1969 which puts into perspective some of the problems we face in this motion. On pages 29 and 30, the report discusses Canada's national hockey team in the following words:

In Olympic competition, Canada was usually the undisputed world champion until 1956 when our team was defeated by the Russians. (The one exception, Britain's triumph in 1936, was hardly irritating to Canadians, since most of the players came from Canada). The U.S. won the Olympic title in 1960 and the Russians took it in 1964 and 1968.

As time has gone by our fortunes have gone down, until the report was issued in 1969. The report continues:

In 1930, there began the practice of an international tournament each year, sponsored by the International Ice Hockey Federation. This has come to be recognized as the world championship in those three years of the four when the Olympics are not held. Canada has not won this championship . . .

This report, of course, was published in 1969.

. . . since the Trail Smoke Eaters triumphed in Switzerland in 1961. Next year, the championship tournament will be held in Canada for the first time.

We recall that taking place. To continue:

It is worth noting that Canada, the original home of ice hockey, has no special place in the International Ice Hockey Federation. It is merely one member with two delegates. The weight of membership strength is in Europe. Further, the executive leadership of the IIHF has seemed to rest for a generation with a Mr. Bunny Ahearne, an Irishman resident in London. At present, very little ice hockey is played in Britain, and Britain rarely fields a team for international play.

The report goes on to refer to Mr. Ahearne. We all know of his problems and his impact upon Canada as head of the IIHF. Later, the article says:

The organization and selection of an amateur national hockey team for Canada has become a more difficult and thankless task since high quality teams began to emerge from Russia, Sweden and Czechoslovakia in the mid-1950s, just at the time when the quality of our national senior champions, the winners of the Allan cup, was slipping.

Five years ago, . . .

That would be 1964.

. . . the recognition that our champions alone or aided by selected players were inadequate as representatives in the international tournaments led to the development of the national team concept. The managers and scouts of the national team have found a strong resistance to their recruiting efforts among the owners of some amateur teams. These men do not wish to lose their stars because of the potential loss of revenue and the weakening of their teams' capacity in league play.

The professionals have resented the effort of the national team because it has and will deprive them of the services of some outstanding NHL prospects. The NHL has also been reluctant to release any professional players who sought to be reinstated as amateurs in order to qualify for the national team. There is an inherent difficulty, of course, in that the system of contracts, drafts and waivers in the professional hockey setup gives rights to

Sports

every team in the arrangement, most of which are in the United States. Why should a manager in Tulsa or Baltimore waive on claiming a player just because he wants to play for and is wanted by the National Team of Canada?

You will recall some of the problems that we had in that situation last year, even with the Team Canada. To continue:

The concept of the national hockey teams had had several elements of reasoning and motivation. Firstly, there was the idea of providing some continuity of players and coaching from year to year. Secondly, there was the belief good playing talent could be attracted by the chance to represent one's country; to get a higher education while playing (especially a college education), . . .

Perhaps that could be part of the concept that the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Mr. Hueglin) puts forward.

. . . to have an income while playing and at college; to travel widely both in Canada and abroad; and to get a splendid opportunity to develop individual and group hockey skills under good coaching and through excellent competition.

The practical problem of financing the national team was faced by establishing the Hockey Foundation, under which businessmen raised funds through corporate donations, through obtaining government grants via the CAHA, and from the revenues brought in by games in which the National Team took part.

That is not something new; it has gone on for years and years.

At first, the National Team was centered in Winnipeg; then in 1967-68, another team or a "B" team was established in Ottawa. A surprisingly high number of young men has come forward in the past five years to try out for the National Team.

That is going back to 1969.

It is a fair judgment, we think, that the team representing us in this period has been better than we could get with an Allan cup or Memorial cup championship team. It has not been good enough and there have been problems in recruiting, in getting good competition, and in getting the necessary financial support.

There are several bald consequences of the failure of the National Team concept on the ice at international tournaments.

This is as it was in 1969, of course.

Despite the personal sacrifices of our young players, who have tried gallantly to uphold our hockey traditions, the defeats our National Teams have suffered have had an adverse effect, not only upon our hockey reputation, but upon the standing which Canada generally has abroad. Officials of the Department of External Affairs have assured us that this deterioration in the over-all image of Canada abroad, and especially in Europe, because of our recent failures in hockey, is of much concern to them. The "body sporting" in Canada, including both those directly involved in the game and the huge public who know it enough to consider it our own, are discouraged, pessimistic, angry, or demanding of a better performance.

The article has summed up the problems of trying to put a national team together in 1969 and comments on why it did not work. Now comes the important part:

We found an amazingly strong agreement in all the meetings we held with various hockey groups across Canada that Canada must have a strong National Team. Accordingly, we sought out the area of friction and weakness, particularly by convening a "summit" meeting on hockey in Ottawa on December 10, 1968. There were present, representatives of the National Team, the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, the President of the National Hockey League, the senior officers of the Montreal Canadiens and the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Directorate of Fitness and Amateur Sport and a number of interested business men.

The following points emerged. Canada is being defeated in world competition because the rules of eligibility and the nature and application of the international playing rules work against her. The European countries, particularly the Russians, are not