

Table Games

Board games, such as those manufactured by Gamma Two Games (P.O. Box 46347, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6R 4G6), reflect Canadian preoccupations. The game at the right, *The Last Spike*, is all about building a railway west; and the title, at least, was inspired by Pierre Berton's celebrated history of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The origin of card games, such as the two described below, are more obscure, but they are played by one generation after another.



[99]

The players are each dealt four cards, and each time one is laid down another is drawn from a central pile. Each card has the numerical value indicated. Face cards other than kings are worth 10, and aces can count as 1 or 11. If the first player lays down a 5 of clubs, for example, and the next lays down a 7 of diamonds, the total is 12. The player who hits 99 exactly wins. The player whose card puts the total over 99 loses. Some cards are special: a king brings the total to 99 automatically, no matter when it is played. A 10 can be added or subtracted. A player with a 9 may pass his turn. A 4 reverses the order of playing and permits the holder to skip a turn. Players hold cards back for future advantage. A player accumulating four cards of the same face automatically wins. The players keep track of who wins each round, and if any player ever goes over 99, the excess number is subtracted from his number of wins. It is then almost impossible for him to

catch up. In some games the players simply count wins, and the one who reaches a specified number first is the champion of the day.

[PAQUET VOLEUR]

Each player is dealt four cards, and four cards are laid face up in the centre of the table. A player may take any table card that matches a card in his hand (a seven with a seven, a jack with a jack). The card from the table and the one from the hand are stacked in front of the player, face up. This is called a "steal." Further pairs are placed on top so only one card is showing.

If a player has no matching cards in his hand, he must lay down one of his other cards. Another round is then dealt, continuing until all the cards are dealt out. At any point in the game, a player with a card matching the top card on another player's "steal" pile may place it over that top card and steal the whole pile. The player who wins is the one who winds up with the most cards.

The name of this game is one foot high-kick. It is a feature of the Northern Games held in Coppermine, Northwest Territories, since 1970. Each year over thirty Indian and Inuit communities compete in games rooted in their pastimes and domestic skills.

