

## There are 0,000,000 Hockey pucks in Canada.

It has been hockey as usual this season — ever expanding.

By the end of the season:

Almost one million games, professional and amateur, will have been played.

434,000 players on 24,800 amateur teams will have played.

Approximately \$10 million will have been taken in at the gates and for broadcasting rights.

An average of \$35,000 will have been paid to each National Hockey League player in salary and bonuses.

Over a thousand games will have been lost due to injury and sickness of key players.

Approximately \$2 million will have been spent on commercials.

Approximately 190,000 miles will have been traveled by professional teams.

Untold miles will have been driven by mothers on frigid winter mornings, taking their sons to the rink, and many of those sons will eventually go to play in such iceless places as Tulsa and Los Angeles.

It is about the biggest deal in Canada, the national identity crisis included. Other activity stops at game time Saturday night, and a third of the population is glued to the set for the professional game of the week. Informed sources say that some very high public figures — opposition as well as government — have been inattentive at Monday morning conferences.

Besides the public, there are five groups overseeing hockey in Canada: the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union, National Hockey League, National Hockey League Players Association, the Department of National Health and Welfare, and Hockey Canada.

The first four are more or less self-explanatory. Hockey Canada is a relatively new addition — a government corporation set up in 1969 to be in charge of the national team and to make the most of hockey as a national resource.

At the moment, Hockey Canada is negotiating to put the national team back in international play. In 1970 there was to have been a

world tournament in Winnipeg. Canada had International Ice Hockey Federation sanction to play professional players — as many, if not most, good players in Canada have been paid or subsidized for playing at one time or another. Before the tournament, the USSR and then other countries dropped out, saying their amateurs shouldn't play professionals. Canada took the stand that it wouldn't play in international competition if it couldn't play its best players and hasn't since.

The bargaining points are on the style of play — Canada may be willing to play a less rough game internationally than domestically. Also, Canada is talking about playing international "exhibition" games, rather than tournaments.

Another of Hockey Canada's undertakings has been to give 98 boys \$85,400 in federal grants so they could go to Canadian colleges rather than have to take US scholarships.

And another has been to commission Toronto pollsters Martin Goldfarb & Associates to do a \$45,000 study on the sociology of hockey in Canada, to try to see just how thoroughly the game is woven into the fabric of Canadian life. Assigned last January and finished in April, the report is now being digested by Hockey Canada. Its director, Christopher Lang, says it will be released sometime before spring.

Four areas were looked into: professional hockey's impact on Canadian life in general; the attitudes of parents about the game; the attitudes of young players; and the state of abuses in the game — drugs, for example.

One hitherto unexplored aspect of the game, Mr. Lang says, is the involvement of women. It's the mother who drives the boy to the rink for practice, laces his skates, answers his questions. At recent Hockey Canada skill tests, mothers out-numbered fathers by two and three to one.

"Maybe," speculates Mr. Lang, "games should be sponsored by General Foods rather than Molson's beer. Perhaps insights like these will put hockey in better shape than other national resources twenty years from now."

