

1976 Olympic Games stamps

Postmaster-General, Bryce Mackasey, recently announced the issue on September 23 of four additional 8-cent Olympic commemorative stamps in the "Keeping Fit" series.

The red-coloured stamps depict Canadians participating in the winter sports of snowshoeing, skiing, skating, and curling.

This issue also employs the new engraving technique of the hidden image — a first in stamp design — introduced with the first Olympic commemorative stamps last March. The image of the 1976 Olympic Games symbol becomes visible only when the stamp is held obliquely towards light.

The new issue conveys the pictorial message that winter sports can be fun for both young and old, as well as beneficial to the health.

"Whether expert or novice, all who participate in these and other such activities do much to promote the spirit of the 1976 Olympic Games in Canada," said Mr. Mackasey.



Curling

Even before the reign of King Henry VIII, curling had numerous devotees. There is some dispute as to where it first appeared, some giving the credit to the Netherlands and others to Scotland, but the game evolved in Scotland and became so popular there that a bishop was charged with curling on the Sabbath. The pastime reputedly arrived in Canada with General Wolfe's soldiers, and by the winter of 1902-3 was such an important part of the national scene that a tour of Canada by a Scottish team was planned in the hope that it would produce "...a notable advance toward imperial federation". Politics aside, the heart and soul of curling are courtesy and sociability.



Skating

Skating in Europe dates back at least as far as the eighth century. The Indians of North America also may have conceived the technique. Both societies tied animal bones to their footwear with thongs; Champlain is said to have skated in this manner.



Skiing

Humans were probably skiing long before the oldest existing ski was built 4,500 years ago. The sport came to Canada with Scandinavian immigrants. The original Canadian ski clubs were primarily concerned with jumping and, later, cross-country racing. More recently, downhill skiing has become popular. In the past few years, however, cross-country skiing (also called trail skiing or touring) has been making a comeback.



Asians, Europeans and North Americans have for hundreds of years used snowshoes for travelling in the winter. In Canada, the snowshoe reached its highest form among Indians living in wooded regions that received an annual cover of deep, soft snow. Like many skills that were once necessities for survival, snowshoeing has now become a form of recreation.

Clothing prices survey

Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister André Ouellet recently announced that his Department was conducting a cross-country study into the effect upon consumer prices of the removal, last July, of the federal sales tax on clothing and footwear.

He noted that both Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Finance Minister John Turner had earlier stated that they expected manufacturers, importers and retailers to pass on their cost savings from the tax removal in the form of lower prices to clothing and footwear buyers, and not to enhance their profit position.

Recent newspaper articles have suggested that the full benefits of the tax savings had yet to be reflected in retail prices. As retailers dispose of stocks in their stores and warehouses on which the tax has already been paid, the impact of the tax removal should be increasingly apparent. "Already," Mr. Ouellet commented, "a number of retailers have informed the Department that they were immediately reflecting the removal of the taxes in their selling prices." Mr. Ouellet therefore suggests that consumers shop around to ensure that they were receiving the benefit of the tax-cost saving.

The study, to be completed by mid-November, is in two phases — a field survey, concentrating mainly in urban centres but covering some smaller centres; and a detailed analysis of price movements of products that affect the clothing and footwear components of the consumer price index, as well as relevant components of the wholesale price index and the industrial selling price index.

"When the analysis of the information collected is concluded in late December, a report based upon the findings will be forwarded to the Minister of Finance," Mr. Ouellet said.