

*Sports*

Is there justification for the spending of public funds on such a team? If there is not, then there has been a misappropriation of many millions of dollars on other projects over the years, I would submit. Few Canadians out of the total will ever see the National Gallery, few will see the National Arts Centre, and relatively few will read or see books or films that are government funded. I am not saying that these moneys are ill spent. What I am saying is that these cultural activities do not touch most Canadians as Team Canada would. Culture in the narrow context has, in North America and perhaps in most other countries, always appealed to and been supported by a limited segment of the community, but plays, ballet, and so on, are state supported in Canada to some degree. Hockey is part of Canadian culture. It is ours, and I submit that it is certainly worthy of support, as worthy as any of those cultural programs which are now funded.

If funds are to continue to go to these other activities which touch only the few, who would deny them to an activity that touches us all? Let the government endow this Team Canada, but let private individuals who wish to be patrons be allowed to donate their own funds as well. Thousands of private businesses and individuals support local teams. Indeed, without them many of our minor leagues could not exist. Permit them to do so at this level as well. Indeed, in recent months individuals have approached me to learn if they could be permitted to outfit local minor teams with the same tax concessions afforded companies at present. If they respond, as I am certain they will, the government role need be only that of providing an endowment, for these private contributions will soon play a major role in the financing of our team.

Perhaps such a happy combination of private and public means might even overcome the objections of those who presently deny us the right to participate in international hockey. Certainly, the combination of public initiative, coupled with private support, is something that can commend itself to each of us, no matter what our personal political philosophy may be. Young men who played for such a Team Canada would, in my estimation, have to be paid, certainly not at the levels at which some of our commercial teams are able and willing to pay their players. The commercial teams pay for profit; the players play for profit. Team Canada's players would have to be rewarded well, not with niggardly pay, for the time taken from their lives which they would be contributing, but they would be playing not for profit alone but for their country. I sincerely believe that we have young men who would play for this reason, young men who after a time would develop into a team which would regain us our stature in international hockey without us having to bring back all those men who have become professionals.

Will such a team be accepted in international hockey? If it is not, then the farce that we have seen in the last few years would be complete. We all know that foreign teams are not composed of amateurs in the true sense but of people who are supported in their careers. Indeed, we all know that even in local teams, in some cases at least, jobs have been opened up to players who are an asset. This is no secret, I believe, and I think it is generally accepted. The Olympics was started as an amateur venture. There are no real amateurs who take part in it in the sense in

which it was started, that is, to give it a good try for a few weeks. All are dedicated athletes training full time. This does not take away from them in any way. I am simply saying that for them the sport absorbs almost all of their lives.

Surely, Team Canada, funded more and more from private sources, would have to be accepted. If it were not, then, in my opinion, we should do away with the hypocrisy of formal international competitions of this nature once and for all. Team Canada, funded initially by the federal government and increasingly by private contributions, calling upon young men of ability to represent Canada, what would it do aside from trying to get international competition to regain supremacy for us in our sport? It would do this. It would travel from Bonavista to Vancouver Island, certainly from the Great Lakes border and perhaps even to the Arctic circle. There are those things which unite us in Canada and those which unfortunately differentiate and sometimes divide us.

Certainly for me, coming to this House has been an enlightening experience if for no other reason than that the great differences that exist in our land have been brought home to me as never before. Having been raised and having worked very largely in southwestern Ontario, having spent years studying history and geography in college and years teaching history and geography, did not prepare me for trying to fully comprehend the breadth of our land or the great intensity with which members from other regions regard concerns which have been unknown to me or which I have found to be of no great importance. Canada is bound together by ties of history, economy and sentiment. We are faced daily with trying to reconcile divergent economic demands. Part of our history has been divisive rather than uniting in nature. Surely, any activity that ties us together by sentiment and by media exposure can be nothing but good, particularly if it is produced locally and is in no manner a divisive force.

For some, myself included, the expansion of commercial hockey in recent years has destroyed a focal point of interest. It used to be that I would support Toronto all the way, and then if they were beaten out of the play-offs I would immediately switch to the Canadiens as they were the Canadian team in the play-offs. Today, I am lost in a welter of teams, with the result that all bearings are gone, and this welter of teams is very largely foreign.

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Team Canada would travel across Canada playing local teams. It may be too much to hope for, but perhaps local commercial teams would play for benefit performances. If not, then local teams of another nature would certainly be fielded. I have no doubt that if Team Canada came to Niagara Falls or Fort Erie, our arenas would be filled to overflowing. They would be filled for a number of reasons. First, there would be interest in our national team; second, there would be hope that our boys would upset them, and third, there would be a direct benefit to be derived by the local arena or area from the game.

Report concerning Team Canada on the national news could be a unifying force. As it moved from one arena to another across Canada, it would be a constant factor in the news, a constant factor to which we could all relate. It