

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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FEDERAL AID FOR AMATEUR SPORT

Remarks by Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker,
at the opening of the Hockey Hall of Fame,
Canadian National Exhibition Grounds, Toronto,
August 26, 1961.

The opening of Hockey's Hall of Fame is a significant event in the history of Canadian athletics. It is also a fine example of the close ties existing between Canada and the United States and the unity we have built in the pursuit of recreation. We share the heroes of hockey as no other countries on earth do. This building has the fame of solidarity between the two nations. Two-thirds of the money for this building was raised in the land of Canada's neighbour, but here it stands to honour the deeds of hockey players from both sides of the border.

Hockey is a great instrument of national unity -- and of good relations with the United States.

The extent to which hockey has been accepted in other countries is seen in the strong competition Canadian teams sometimes experience overseas. When they meet defeat, harsh words are sometimes said, even in Parliament, as my colleague and one of the greatest of Canadian goal keepers in amateur hockey, Senator Joe Sullivan, will testify. However strong the competition, it is good to know that hockey has been adopted abroad so wholeheartedly.

I wish time would permit me to pay tribute to all of you who have contributed so much to Canada's hockey history. I pay tribute to the hard work of those who have played so large a role not only in making the achievements of champions possible but in the task of developing sport and recreation for the benefit of the Canadian people.

Gathered here to honour the great in hockey, we might turn our thoughts to the future and to the foundations necessary for the building not only of greatness in all fields of sport but the physical vitality, energy and good health of Canadians.