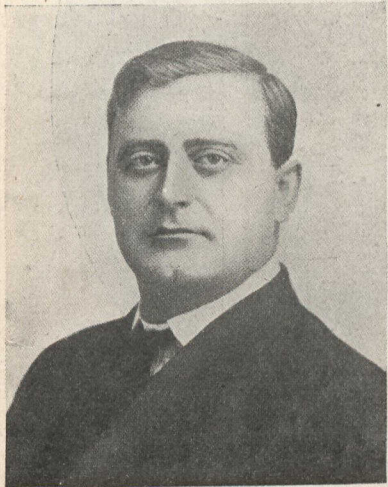


CURLING IN THE WEST

The Last of Three Articles on the Roarin' Game

By H. J. P. GOOD.



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ONTARIO can boast of its clubs and of its earlier origin, but Manitoba is undoubtedly — as a recent Scottish visitor put it — the “very fireplace or hearth of the game.” Barely twenty years old, the Manitoba branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club can boast no fewer than 95 affiliated clubs with seemingly more a-coming. The

bonspiel held annually at Winnipeg is the greatest curling event in the country, attracting usually upwards of 500 curlers, the majority of whom make the Prairie City their home for the entire fortnight during which the bonspiel lasts. As a matter of fact the event is an international affair, for players are usually present not only from Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and even the far-away Yukon, but also from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Montana and North Dakota. So general are the celebrations going on during the bonspiel that it is recorded of a Chinese laundry outside the provincial capital that instead of the ancient inscription “All ye who know not Plato enter here,” there appear the magic words “Closed during the bonspiel at Winnipeg.” It is not strange that the Rev. John Kerr, chaplain of the R. C. C. C., testifies that “In the annals of the game there is no place like Winnipeg.” The bonspiel is generally held in the second and third weeks of February, and results in some 200 matches being played, competitors at times being called upon to take part in four a day. No wonder some of the players go into special training for some weeks before the huge gathering, for of a certainty endurance under such circumstances must cut no small figure. Entertainments are the order of the day, several of Winnipeg’s wealthiest practically keeping open house for visitors. The city council subscribes \$1,000 towards the expenses and citizens usually contribute between three and four thousand dollars more, the balance required being derived from entrance fees, sale of banquet tickets, etc. This year’s bonspiel, which concludes this week, is the twentieth annual. As usual Mr. J. D. Flavell, of Lindsay, whose club won the Ontario Tankard again this year, had a rink on hand.

Mr. R. J. Mackenzie is the patron of the year of the Manitoba branch; Mr. I. W. deC. O’Grady, general manager of the newly combined Northern and Crown Banks, president; W. H. Whalen, Fort William, first vice-president; Wm. Ferguson, M.P.P., Hamiota, second vice-president; J. P. Robertson, provincial librarian, secretary-treasurer (from the inception of the branch), and Rev. Hiram Hull, Winnipeg, chaplain.

IN SASKATCHEWAN.

WHILE in Saskatchewan, owing to the magnificent distances, neither curlers nor clubs are as numerous as in Manitoba, the recently formed Saskatchewan branch of the R. C. C. C. claims 22 affiliated clubs with between six and seven hundred members. Lieutenant-Governor Forget is patron; Premier Scott, hon. president; Mr. E. M. Saunders, Moose Jaw, president; Mr. C. J. Roxborough, Grenfell, first vice-president; Mr. A. P. McNab, Rosthern, second vice-president; Mr. A. Mitchell, Weyburn, third vice-president; Rev. A. E. Henry, Regina, chaplain; and R. B. Ferguson, Regina, secretary-treasurer. The branch is divided into ten districts for medal-playing purposes. In addition a big bonspiel is played in the third or fourth week of January each year, when such trophies as the Grand Challenge Cup, the Saskatchewan and Drewry Cups, the Pharaoh Shield

and the Calgary Brewing Challenge Cup provide the principal bones of contention.

IN ALBERTA.

THE Alberta branch of the R. C. C. C., like the Saskatchewan, is a juvenile organisation, being barely four years old, and like the Saskatchewan, is an off-shoot of the Manitoba branch. It was organised on the initiative of Lieutenant-Colonel James Walker (then Major), who went to the Northwest in the early seventies as an officer of the Mounted Police, and is now commanding officer of the 15th Light Horse at Calgary. Alberta and British Columbia were both represented at the organisation meeting, some 40 curlers being present. Fourteen clubs affiliated with the Alberta branch the first year of its existence (1904) and four have joined since, representing five or six hundred curlers. The first patron was Colonel James Walker; the first president, Mr. James Smart, Calgary; the first vice-president, J. H. Marris, Edmonton; the second vice-president, J. G. Utlock, Golden, B.C.; chaplain, Rev. A. McQueen, Edmonton; and secretary-treasurer, J. R. Miquelon, Calgary. The present officers are: Patrons, A. E. Cross, Calgary, and R. Secord, Edmonton; president, J. H. Morris, Edmonton; first vice-president, H. S. McLeod, Calgary; second vice-president, Senator L. G. De Veber, Lethbridge; secretary-treasurer, J. R. Miquelon, Calgary. An annual bonspiel is held at Calgary in January, at which a Grand Challenge Cup, a Walker Cup, a Calgary Brewing Cup, a Visitors’ Shield, a cup donated by the great cattle man, P. Burns, a cup donated by Thos. Lees, of Winnipeg, and another by R. J. Hutchings, of Calgary, are the leading trophies competed for. Last year 26 rinks participated in the bonspiel, and this year, which is the fourth, and which was held the week commencing January 20th, there were 30.

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

I TURN now to British Columbia, and here as in the Northwestern provinces, I find curling to flourish buoyantly. The British Columbia (formerly Kootenay) Curling Association was formed in February, 1898, and has consequently now reached the ripe age of ten. The association has in affiliation 14 clubs with a membership of between five and six hundred. “Archie,” or A. B. Mackenzie, Rossland, (formerly of Toronto) is patron; His Honour E. P. Wilson, Cranbrook, president; G. O. Buchanan, Kaslo, vice-president; J. S. C. Fraser, Rossland (twice patron and thrice president), second vice-president; A. T. Walley, Nelson, third vice-president; John Cholditch, Cranbrook, (presumably a

layman) chaplain; and A. C. Nelson, Cranbrook, secretary-treasurer. The bonspiels held have been as follows: 1899, Rossland, 14 rinks competed; 1900, Rossland, 11 rinks; 1901, Rossland, no record of rinks kept; 1902, Sandon, no record; 1903, Rossland, 22 rinks; 1904, Revelstoke, 24 rinks; 1905, Nelson, 25 rinks; 1906, Rossland, 18 rinks; and 1907, Cranbrook, details not given in Annual. The principal trophies competed for are: Grand Challenge cup, British Columbia Curling Association trophy, Oliver cup, Walkerville cup, Hudson Bay cup, Tuckett District trophy, Fit-Reform cup, Spring cup, P. Burns cup, and the Cordwood trophy. The British Columbia Manual says of the last-mentioned trophy, which is probably the most unique prize played for by curlers at the bonspiel of any association:

“When the Sandon bonspiel of 1898 had ended, with the throwing of the last stone in the finals for the Bostock cup, the devotees of the sport were still unsatisfied. Grimmett was there; good old Sanford, the Sky Pilot; and Wilson and Mairn; and the only “Harry Smith,” and others—all equally insatiable. One and all longed for just another trial of skill—“anither end or twa, afore partin’.” Enthusiasm acquired a semi-religious aspect, and a sudden idea, emanating from the fertile brain of the genial Harry, brought about, to the satisfaction of all, a ‘final of finals’—in connection with which the furnishing of a ‘ready-to-burn’ cord of wood to the local parsonage was at stake. The losers in the contest were to purchase the wood, the winners to cut and split it. A trophy of unique design, minus silver and gold, was then and there designed and constructed. It was to be awarded to the winning rink. So originated the ‘Cordwood’ trophy.”

“A description of it would be superfluous; it speaks for itself. It must be seen to be appreciated. Inscribed on one of its faces, we can read the words:

“His first, was narrow;
His second, went through;
With third, to the right;
What could poor Harry do?”

And “poor Harry” has curled his last stone, for harassed by many complications, he passed to his last resting-place on the 4th day of September, 1907, mourned by every curler in Kootenay.

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Thus, as I have related in three veracious articles, does the grand old roarin’ game flourish in many and divers places, even in the far distant Yukon, from the capital of which, to wit Dawson City, there descended last year two rinks to the Winnipeg bonspiel. One of the most remarkable features of



Whyte Cup,—1907. Won by Assiniboine, Winnipeg.

G. F. Galt (3) Major Bell (1) J. W. DeC. O’Grady (2) M. Aldous (skip)