

Art in Precious Metal

To pay tribute to Canada in hosting its first Winter Olympic Games, the Royal Canadian Mint is issuing a series of 10 sterling silver coins and one gold coin.

Canada's Olympic coins are true works of art. Top Canadian artists competed to produce 11 winning designs — each of which captures the "Pursuit of Excellence" theme in legal-tender sterling silver and gold.

The 10-coin series in sterling silver depicts the sports of downhill skiing, speed skating, hockey, biathlon, cross-country skiing, freestyle skiing, figure skating, curling, ski jumping, and bobsleigh. The combined mintage for all 10 coins has been limited to 5 million worldwide. An independent selection committee chose the designs on the basis of their artistic merit, from hundreds of



submissions received by the Royal Canadian Mint. And while the series was never intended to be geographically representative of Canada, the artists come from British Columbia, Newfoundland and Ontario.

Canada launched its Olympic Coin Program in September 1985 on four continents: North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Orders received from more than 24 countries have surpassed 2 million pieces, making it the most successful of any commemorative

Olympic Winter Coin Program to date.

Market research indicates that buyers of Olympic coins not only seek a memento to cherish for many years, but also want to support amateur athletes in Canada and around the world. To date, more than \$1.5 million of the revenues generated by the program has been donated to the Olympic committees worldwide to help athletes. The Mint expects to raise approximately \$30 million as part of the \$200-million financial commitment from

the Government of Canada to the Olympic Winter Games.

In fall 1987, Canada issued its first gold Olympic coin — it depicts a hand carrying the Olympic torch. The stylized flame forms an image of the Rocky Mountains, evoking the spirit of the Olympic Games in Canada. Its mintage is restricted to 350 000 worldwide. Released as the annual issue of Canada's \$100 gold coin, it was designed to celebrate Canada's Olympic achievement in the highest of honours: gold.

