

ATHLETIC Sports and Pastimes

CURLING.

Tobogganing and curling appear to have been in a game of see-saw for some few seasons past, with the advantage decidedly in favour of the latter just at present. As the interest in tobogganning has decayed, so has the membership of the curling clubs increased; and the game of curling is of such a very seductive character that the infection having once been caught escape from the toils appears to be almost impossible. It is very seldom indeed that the stanes and besom are relinquished after having once been assumed.

The Ontario Branch R. C. C. C. have held their annual meeting and the grouping of the various clubs for the blue ribbon of the Province—the Ontario Tankard—has been announced. I will endeavour during the coming season to publish a complete record of the competition—both the primary and final—for this interesting trophy, which is par excellence the curling competition of the Dominion, nearly 100 clubs participating in the primaries, and the finals usually occupying all the attention and nearly all the ice of the Toronto curlers for two days or more.

The Canadian Branch, R. C. C. C., have not yet held their annual meeting; and their dilatoriness in this respect is but a type of the distance they lag behind their brethren in the west in all matters connected with their works. While the Ontario association have by energy and intelligent activity aided and encouraged the development of clubs in every village in the Province, the Quebec or Canadian Branch have by their indifferent and perfunctory manner of performing their duties, manifesting a careless indifference as to whether clubs became enrolled as members or not, actually allowed clubs to slip from their grasp, and abandon their irons for the more friendly if less scientific granite.

It behoves the Canadian Branch to bestir themselves, unless it is their wish to see a moderately small state grow smaller still and beautifully less.

It is strange how completely alone the Canadian Branch stands from the remainder of the curling community. I believe I am right in saying that they are the only curlers in the world using iron instead of granite for "stances," and they form a barrier between the eastern and western curlers of the Dominion which it is a pity cannot be obliterated.

There can be no question the irons enable a much closer and more scientific game to be played than the stones do; but there is more boisterous fun over the latter and none of that intense earnestness and business like anxiety which not unfrequently characterizes an iron game.

The weight of the stones being so much

less than the average irons,—the one weighs about 40 pounds while the other runs perhaps 60 pounds,—makes the game with stones a much quicker one than the other.

The iron travelling up the rink with a slow methodical pace, carried along on a keen day almost by its own weight, gives ample space for anxious careful watching and no little anxiety as to whether it will just accomplish the object with which it was delivered, or barely miss it by a fraction of an inch. This slow motion is altogether unknown to the stone players, as their lighter weapons require a more rapid delivery than the iron, and travel up the rink in a more hasty, if less accurate manner, and make the game both quicker and more lively.

I know I will incur the wrath of all iron players at the bare thought of suggesting the substitution of the granite for the iron; but it is to be regretted in the interests of union and good fellowship that the iron was ever introduced.

It may be said that many iron playing clubs have outfits of granites, and are always willing to play a game if the chance occurs. This, however, is not the same as if the granite was the regular weapon of war for them; and it is no satisfaction and very little pleasure for members of an iron playing club to play a stone playing one or vice versa.

Will anyone encourage me in an effort to have granite adopted throughout the Dominion?

SKATING.

The annual meeting of the Canadian Amateur Skating Association has been held in Montreal.

The report regrets the lack of interest shown in the Association outside of the city. In only one place apart from Montreal—Ottawa—has the Association more than a single member.

This certainly is not encouraging, but it may very reasonably be asked, what possible advantage is there to be gained by joining the Association?

It has always seemed to me that there was a want in this Association which would have to be supplied before it could be made sufficiently interesting to the average skater to induce him to become a member. What this want is, or how to supply it, I regret to say I cannot suggest, although I have tried to think the matter out more than once.

When I saw that Mr. E. S. Clouston had been elected President for the current year I thought the difficulty might be solved, if brought before him, and it was with very great regret I found he had been obliged to decline the office.

It is most unfortunate for the skating association that he could not have given them one season as their chief officer, for if there is one man in the Dominion more fitted than another to quickly grasp a situation, and devise a remedy of any

defect therein, it is the present General Manager of the Bank of Montreal; and the same qualities which in business affairs enable him to take in at a glance a position which calls for considerable thought from others to understand, would have probably found a remedy for the semi moribund condition of the skating association.

I would be glad if anything could be done to increase the interest in this association and its work, and will gladly receive any suggestions to that end.

HOCKEY.

Clubs are organizing and reorganizing in larger numbers than ever this season, and the activity displayed makes it very evident that the popularity of this favourite game is still on the ascending grade.

From a spectator's point of view, hockey is probably the best game played in Canada, and a match between two first class clubs ought to draw quite as good a gate as any lacrosse match.

The Provincial Associations in Ontario and Quebec have reorganized, but I have not seen notices of meetings in any of the other provinces.

Two of the features of the meeting of the Ontario Association are greatly to be regretted. The fact that it has been considered obligatory upon the Association to expel a club from its membership so early since the organization, cannot but be considered as a most unfortunate occurrence. That the action of the Association was not warranted I do not for a moment mean to insinuate, but it is too bad that a club which apparently had very good material in it, should have been allowed to fall under the control of such undesirable parties as appear to have secured the St. George's.

I notice that although the Association has disqualified the St. George's as a club, the members of it are not individually affected. Surely this is not quite right, if correctly reported. Some of the members of this club must have been responsible for the very reprehensible mismanagement, and if they are all to be eligible for membership in other clubs they may carry their wrecking tactics into other quarters, and do more damage than they are worth.

I certainly would favour refusing permission to any of the officers or members of committee of the expelled club to join any other club in the Union, until the obligations which they had incurred had been discharged.

Another regrettable feature of the report was the announcement of the resignation of the Lindsay Club from the Association. This club played well last year, and indeed much of the credit of organizing the Association itself belongs to the main prop of the Lindsay Club, that keen and active player Mr. John A. Barron, whom every sportsman through-