

"This sport, I think, is the easiest to lose your poise in. There are so many factors to be aware of that you're constantly on edge. It's probably the only game where a player has to wonder before the contest if he's going to get into a fight. It's a game where you can get hurt at any moment by an object whizzing around at over 100 miles per hour. It's one of the few games where a player carries a lethal weapon in his hand. You have the possibility of falling down on, or being cut by, skates. The game is played on the hardest playing surface of them all, and inside boards which can cause serious injuries. Put these possibilities together and you have the most dangerous team sport in existence." HARRY SINDEN

The Month That Canada Saw Red

[A BREATHLESS RETURN TO THE INTERNATIONAL RINK]

In 1948 Canada won the World's Cup by a score of 47 to 0.

It proved (what everyone knew) that Canadian hockey players, even amateurs, would always be invincible. The Canadians continued to win Olympic medals and World Cups the way the Chinese win ping pong games.

Then in 1956 the Russians won the Olympic hockey championship. Canada tied for second place with Czechoslovakia and Sweden. After the tie was resolved on the basis of the number of goals, Canada came in fourth. For the first time in history, Canada didn't get a medal. It was a shock, but there was a perfectly logical explanation. Canada's players were amateurs in the old-fashioned sense. They worked at other jobs and played in the evenings and week-ends. The amateurs of the other countries were paid by their states to play hockey full-time. In 1970 Canada withdrew from international competition pending international agreement on the definition of the word amateur.

Last year the glorious resolution came.

The Russians, who had run out of worthy competition, agreed to put their best men up against a picked team of Canadian professionals. After some haggling in Prague, an agreement was engineered by representatives of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association with the enthusiastic support of Hockey Canada and, in time, Alan Eagleson, the NHL players' representative. It had its flaws from the Canadian point of view: the playing time was in September (four games in Canada followed by four in Moscow)—the off-season when the Canadian players would be the least in condition; and it would be played under international hockey rules with international officials presiding, a distinct disadvantage to players schooled in the rough NHL game. Still these were matters of no real consequence—the Canadian position had been accepted, the professionals would play, Canada was once more back in international competition.

A coach was chosen, Harry Sinden, formerly

