

Canadian Sport

EDWARD DURNAN, the stalwart young Canadian, is now in Australia, with the avowed purpose of bringing the sculling championship of the world back to Canada. It cannot be said that his pilgrimage has as yet aroused any great enthusiasm in his native land but this is rather because of a lingering doubt as to his ability to accomplish his purpose than because Canadians have lost their love of a good oarsman. Interest in rowing is not dead in Canada, but for a number of years it has been resting very peacefully. Since the days when Hanlan was in a class by himself, a little later when O'Connor appeared to have all possible rivals at his mercy and later still when stalwart Jake Gaudaur carried the coveted title of champion of the world to the lakes of New Ontario, Canadians had sadly concluded that the race of oarsmen had petered out. Then came Tom Sullivan, the portly proprietor of an English "pub," all the way to Toronto Bay to try conclusions with Eddie Durnan. The latter defeated him handily. The race created old-time interest, was witnessed by an old-time crowd, and gathered one of the greatest fleets of pleasure craft ever seen in Toronto waters.

Then the old-time critics began to sit up and take notice. They discovered that Durnan's sculling had all the finish that made his uncle Edward Hanlan famous. At one bound Durnan sprang from the second class of oarsmen into a likely candidate for world's honours. Another bound carried him to Australia to wrest from Towns the title the latter had won from good old Jake Gaudaur at Rat Portage. Naturally Canadians still doubt Durnan's "class." Of course a similar doubt still clings to Towns. Was it he or old age that beat Jake Gaudaur? However, Towns has defended his title against the best scullers his native Australia could produce. He is the best there. Durnan is the best Canada has. And Australia and Canada have long enjoyed pretty nearly a monopoly of the champion oarsmen of the world.

Will Durnan win? To tell the truth Canadian hopes do not run too high. Australia has proved the grave rather than the realisation of just such hopes. It was there Hanlan fell. It was to an Australian O'Connor had to admit defeat. Can Durnan do better? Finished oarsman that he is has he the physique to stand the strain, the constitution to brave the climate? These queries will be answered on March 2nd next on the Nepean River N. S. W. Till then, Canadians can only keep on hoping that the good old days are about to come again.

The visit of the Capital Lacrosse Club of Ottawa to England this spring brings home to Canadians the rapid strides our national game is making in the affections of the natives of other lands. England has one hundred lacrosse clubs and there are others in Ireland and Scotland. In the United States almost every college plays the game, while one of

them, Johns Hopkins has discarded all other sports in its favour. In addition to this there are clubs in New York, Chicago, St. Paul, Seattle, San Francisco and other places. In short it has gone into the realms of cricket, baseball and football and won its place—a place too that is rapidly growing bigger. It is a game Canadians can be proud of.

But to return to the Capitals' visit. Other teams have been there before them, the Torontos twice and the Brooklyn Crescents once. All these teams have been hospitably received and royally entertained. The Capitals will doubtless get the same glad hand. But there is this one difference. The former visiting teams were all purely amateur while the Capitals are straight professionals. Now lacrosse in England is run on the strictest amateur lines. In fact it is played for pleasure nearly altogether and for exhibition purposes hardly at all. Naturally the question arises, "In the land where a cricket professional has his initials amputated and is looked upon as belonging to another class to the gentleman amateur, will the lacrosse professional be treated in the same way?" Of course the English lacrosse associations have discussed the matter of playing the professional visitors and decided to go on with the game. This rather makes the Capitals their guests and with their reputation as hosts to sustain they may come to see that a man may accept remuneration for playing lacrosse and yet be a gentleman.

Winnipeg Bonspiel is on this week—spell it with a big "B" for it is the greatest gathering of its kind on earth or rather on ice. It is Winnipeg's winter fair with curling stones taking the place of cattle and crazy quilts. Men with brooms and stones, broad Scotch bonnets and broader accent—generally handpicked for the occasion—gather to it from all parts of Canada and various states in the neighbouring republic. But of course most of them come from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. These come not alone. They bring their wives and families with them, and while the men curl and shout themselves hoarse on the ice the women hunt for bargains in the big stores of the metropolis of the west.

But even the pleasures of shopping pale before the fascination of the roarin' game and night after night sees the rinks crowded with the wives and daughters and sweethearts of the players who follow every shot and shout their encouragement or waft their silent sympathy as the fortunes of the fight do vary. They get the curling fever—that enthusiasm that even thirty below cannot cool. Winnipeg is saturated with it this week and to be a Dunbar or a Bredin, or to defeat one of these kings of the curling game is a greater honour than monarchs can confer. Winnipeg's Bonspiel is rapidly becoming as much of a national institution as Toronto Exhibition.

Next Tuesday brings the finals for the Ontario Tankard, the blue ribbon

of the Ontario Curling Association, that biggest of all Canadian sporting bodies with its ninety-two clubs and four thousand playing members. And this year's finals are a remarkable demonstration of the uncertainties of curling. Of the eight group winners this year only Toronto Granites were in the finals a year ago. Lindsay, Galt and Dundas, who have monopolised the Tankard for the last five years all went down and out in the primaries, while other strong clubs will see their places taken by comparative novices. For instance, Barrie, Preston and East Toronto Aberdeens are all group winners for the first time. Guelph Union, another survivor, got into the select eight once before away back about '86. Detroit has been in the final stages just once and only for a few minutes. Southampton and Paris, the other two, have both been here more than once and the latter has actually carried off the Tankard but neither could be called a regular attendant. However, there are some grand curlers among the new comers and it would not be at all surprising to see one of them carry off the coveted trophy.

Last week there was formed in Montreal a new governing body in sport and the chief clause in its constitution provided that its clubs could play amateurs and professionals on the same team. This shows the trend of sport in Canada under the influence of that commercialism that is everywhere epidemic. Where the first seeds of professionalism were sown in Canadian sport no one can say definitely. Old Montrealers declare that while they were yet young, men who starred on champion lacrosse teams could spend more money than they could earn at their daily work. Consequently the national game may have started the hunt for the almighty dollar that is fast becoming a large part of all strenuous sports. However that may be, players in lacrosse, hockey and football—baseball never made any pretence to being amateur—have been quietly getting something more substantial than applause for years.

And if the lacrosse men were the first to sow the seed they were also the first to throw off all pretence to amateurism. The Canadian Lacrosse Association did it first for its seniors. The National Lacrosse Union came next. They evidently proved that their course was a wise one for the Eastern Canadian Hockey Association followed suit and the Manitoba body fell in line though the Winnipegs and Victorias seceded and clung to the name "amateur."

Nor is this the end. The larger towns in Ontario are clamouring for professional hockey: the C. L. A. with its hundred junior and intermediate clubs says, "we are amateur" and closes one eye knowingly. In fact the only sporting bodies that try to enforce the amateur laws strictly and impartially are the rowing clubs and the Ontario Hockey Association. And alas and alack, even all of these are not above suspicion.