

Canada does not draw together easily. But some moments show our nature. Eleven First Ministers sitting eighteen hours to complete our constitution was one sign of this proud country coming together. So was the fervour with which we all watched those final games between Canada and the Soviet Union. Sport unites us more regularly than politics - so let us recognize that reality in this modern world, and have our athletes help the modern Canada become better known internationally, and better known at home.

Every time a Canadian athlete or team competes internationally, whatever the outcome, Canada shows the world its best face - the face of a vigorous young country, a proud and determined people. Everytime a Pierre Harvey, a Sylvie Bernier, a Carolyn Waldo, moves across a television screen, the world gets a message, the message is: "Nice guys can finish first." Canadians can compete and they can compete against the toughest customers the rest of the world has to offer.

Sports excellence is, by its very nature, democratic. Talent and guts are everything; where a person is born or to whom does not determine who wins.

When he was nine years old, Alex Baumann came to this country from Prague, and brought with him the talent and heart that made him a world champion. Our world champion skating dance team literally covers the country from sea to sea - Rob McCall from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and Tracy Wilson from Port Moody, B.C. Both Ben Johnson and Angella Issajenko came to Canada from Jamaica. The list is endless but the point is always the same: it's what you can do, not who you are or who you know, that counts in sports.

The money the Government spends to ensure that Canadian athletes are able to compete worldwide is a major benefit for particular persons or sport. But it also helps the country. We want Canada's best athletes to share their expertise with our world neighbours, and to contribute to international understanding through sports. We want Canadian competitors to add the considerable weight of their talent to international sports organizations.