Winter Sports in Canada

BY T. PASSINGHAM

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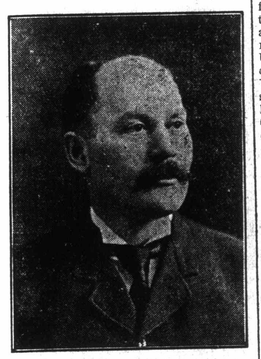
Canada is beyond any doubt the finest sporting country the world knows today. Its varied climate offers a diversity of sports that no other country can dream of. Every game that can be played in any country can be enjoyed to the greatest advantage here, while in addition we have a number of other sports that are peculiar to Canada, and cannot be played in other countries, which do not offer the same happy climatic conditions.

In those unfortunate countries which do not know what a steady cold winter means, the Canadian winter with its plentitude of snow, and frequent zero weather, is regarded



LOUIS RUBENSTEIN, WHO DEFEATED THE BEST FANCY SKATERS OF THE WORLD AT ST. PETERSBURGH.

as something to be dreaded. The hardy Canadian knows better. He knows that Winter is Canada's time for play, as well as business, and that there is more genuine sport here in the winter than in any other country, and not only more sport, but more forms of it than other parts of the earth know of.

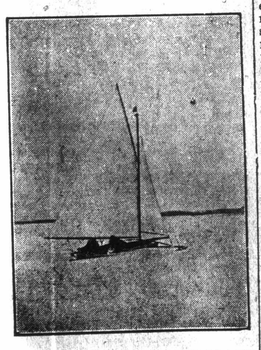
It is only within the past generation that this sporting instinct has been so pronounced a feature of Canadian life. Before then the settlers had too hard a struggle for existence to have much time for sport, but with the growing wealth of the country, and its extended population and area of settlement, the historic Anglo-Saxon love of sport reasserted itself, and now, summer and winter, the whole population either goes in for some form of sport, or follows the organized games of others with the keenest interest.

Summer has but the one purely Canadian sport—lacrosse. Not so winter. Then there is hockey, snow shoeing, tobogganing, horse racing on ice, and many other sports which are indigenous to the country, and remain peculiar to Canada, by reason of her climate. Unfortunate residents of other countries who want to enjoy these sports have to come to Canada for them, and they do by thousands winter after winter, and go away with a very different idea of what "Our Lady of the Snows" has to offer in the way of winter enjoyment than they brought with them. Everything good that any other country has to offer in the way of sport has been adopted in the Dominion, but that which is our own remains ours, and no one can borrow it.

Of all winter sports by far the most popular and exciting is hockey, the ancient game familiar to our forefathers as shinny, and played with clubs on the turf, adapted to the ice. The Canadian ice hockey as played on skates is as far ahead of the old game as is the Imperial Limited, an improvement on the medieval stage coach.

Hockey's Quick Growth.

It is only within the past ten years that hockey has become in winter to Canada what baseball is in summer to the United States—the pre-eminent sport of the season. Before that the winter game was "shinny," a



YACHTING ON THE FROZEN LAKE

sort of disorganised hockey played on any available open ice, and which was an adaptation to ice of the old English game of field hockey.

The old shinny stick was cut from a sapling, with the root crook for the business end. This was not found much good for hockey, and some unknown genius devised a stick perfectly flat in the blade, which is in universal use today. And instead of the hardwood knob or rubber ball of "shinny," which were found too fast on good ice, a flat rubber disk was substituted—the "puck" of today. Instead of the new puck being hit it was lifted. The game as reconstituted sprung into constant popularity wherever the weather would permit, and today there are scores of hockey leagues in Canada, and the colder of the United States. In the latter country the game has found almost as great favor as in Canada, as is shown by the formation of the International Hockey League, a professional organization, which embraces a number of American and Canadian cities. Most of the players in this league, however, are experienced Canadians, and they are teaching the game to the Americans, and being very handsomely paid for doing so. Hockey is one of the fastest and hardest games known, and has proved strenuous enough for the most exacting American sportsmen, even those hardened to Rugby football. The game is very popular in the United States, even outside professional ranks, and there is an Intercollegiate Union, which includes all the great universities of the northeast, as well as the Hockey Union which includes the Crescents of Brooklyn, St. Nicholas of New York, and the N.Y.A.C. There are scores of lesser leagues which make hockey their chief winter pastime. Occasionally American teams come over to Canada for a game; they seldom win anything more than a lot of good experience as to how the game should be played. The main trouble in the States is that the weather is not sufficiently steady in winter to permit of "Canadian" rinks being built, in which the water is introduced, and the cold does the rest, so that in the majority of the American rinks artificial ice is used. The result is that the spectators can attend the games in ordinary dress, and they have in fact become great society events; in Canada the spectators use all the furs they own to keep warm,—as well as occasional doses of other frost resisters from Scotland.

The Stanley Cup.

The most famous hockey team of recent years is undoubtedly that which represents the Dominion capital—the Ottawas, who for years held the "Stanley Cup," by all odds the most famous hockey trophy in the world, as well as the most interesting sporting prize in Canada; no cup has ever given rise to more fierce competition. As its name indicates, it was presented by Lord Stanley during his term as Governor-General of Canada.

A SNOWSHOE TRAMP OVER THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER.

The cup was first heard of in 1893 at a dinner of the Ottawa Hockey Club, when Lord Kilcoursie, who represented Lord Stanley, read a letter in which the Governor-General said: "I have been thinking for some time that it would be a good thing if there were a challenge cup which should be held from year to year by the champion hockey team of the Dominion. There does not appear to be any outward and visible sign of the championship at present, and considering the interest which the games now elicit, and the importance of having them played under generally recognized rules, I am willing to give a cup which shall be held from year to year by the winning club."

This offer was greeted with great enthusiasm, and Lord Stanley lost no time in having the cup—a massive silver bowl on an ebony stand—made. Since then not a winter has passed without the fiercest kind of ice conflicts for its possession, and the result on the sport has been most beneficial. The cup was handed to Sheriff Sweetland and Mr. P. D. Ross of Ottawa as trustees, who soon had to hand it over to the M.A.A.A., as the first champions, with their names fairly engraved on its virgin surface as the first holders.

An Everlasting Challenge.

The cup is to remain an everlasting challenge trophy, the names of each winner being engraved there, although the Ottawas have been fortunate enough to hold it most of the time. As the game has advanced more elaborate rules for the winning of the cup have been devised, and it bids fair to become one of the traditional sporting emblems of Canada as times goes on. Each year the contests grow more frequent, and for several winters past teams have been coming from the west to make a bid for it, and in 1904-5 it came very near going to Rat Portage. However, the Ottawas managed to hold it after a very much criticized game on ice deep in flooded water, and last winter the cup returned to Montreal, being captured by one of the youngest hockey clubs in Canada, the Wanderers, who, although only organized in November, 1903, in about three years made themselves champions of Canada under the leadership of "Jimmy" Strachan, one of the best known hockey players in the metropolis. The club was organized by dissatisfied members of the older Victoria and Montreal clubs and encumbersome. In Eastern Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba the irons are in general use, while the more conservative Scotchmen of Western Ontario still stick to the stones, which are also in general use in Scotland, the home of the game. This use of the irons, however, gave a shock to the Scottish curlers, who recently visited Canada. They were undoubtedly the best stone curlers in the world, but failed to make good against the veterans of Quebec and Manitoba with the irons—although their defeats were also partly due to the fact that they had never before played upon such keen ice as the Canadian frosts give. In Western Ontario, however, where the stones are still in vogue, the Scotch visitors did much better.

So heartily have the Canadians taken to curling, especially in the west, that, from being an almost purely Scottish game it is now in Canada that the world's biggest bonspiel is held at Winnipeg, at which are annually gathered together more of the world's best curlers than can be found on the ice together anywhere else.

In the big French city of Montreal, curling has a long history, although the French Canadians do not play it very much. The first curling club in Canada to have a closed rink was the Montreal Curling Club, which will celebrate its hundredth birthday in January with a big bonspiel, to which they have invited the principal clubs, not only those of Canada and the United States, but throughout the world wherever curling is played. This is expected to be the most unique gathering of the world's best curlers ever got together since the beginning of the game—which is lost in the mists of antiquity amongst the Scottish Highlands.

Natural Home of Skating

Naturally in a country where good ice can be relied upon for months at a stretch every winter, skating has always been one of the most popular and widespread sports of Canada, from the days when the old wooden skates with a steel blade and snow shoes were the only means of getting abroad in winter until the present time, when it is a small village indeed that has not its well built indoor skating rink. As in hockey, the Canadians not only took ahold of skating as a sport, but lost no time in improving the skates. The old wooden skates were soon abandoned, as well as the spring steel skates that on the keen Canadian ice they give much better results than the stones, as well as not being nearly so tered the Federal Hockey League, which was formed by Jimmy Strachan, and the famous Billy Foran of Ottawa. It immediately started after the Stanley Cup, making so good a showing in its earlier games that many of the best hockey players of Montreal joined it, including such famous players as Lester Patrick "Pud" Glass and Billy Strachan—the latter the only member of the first Wanderer team who survived to play on the winning cup team. They will have plenty of work ahead of them to hold the silverware this winter, as all the leading clubs of Canada are getting in line to challenge their right to it.

Hockey is almost necessarily a Canadian game, because no other country on this continent has the climate for it. It flourishes at its best in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Eastern Ontario, but is played from Halifax to Dawson in the Arctic circle.

Curling the Oldest Sport.

Undoubtedly the oldest winter sport in Canada is curling, which for many years was regarded as sacred to the older man, but of late has been taken up with energy by the younger generation. There are some clubs in Quebec, the Ancient Capital, which have been in existence for a century and a half, while one in Montreal is now preparing to celebrate its centenary. In the older days the ancient Scottish game was played with granite stones of an approximate weight, but not mechanically perfect, nor polished. The game was not played in rinks as at present, but on open ice surfaces, where it was not so exact a science as it has since become, but was the scene of much jollity, and the consumption of quantities of the national beverage of the Scotsmen who were the chief exponents of the game at that time, as now. But the game became increasingly popular, and in every town and city and village rinks were built for the exclusive use of the curlers. Improved stones were imported, exactly made, and of artistic appearance. Later even these were improved upon, and in most parts of Canada today "irons" are used. Those are simply metal disks built on the same plan as the stones, and it has been found which succeeded them, and today almost every skater—which means almost every man, woman and child in the country—has a pair of steel blades screwed to his skating boots. Naturally with so much skating many speedy skaters were developed, and a number of the world's records are held by Canadians, notably the record of 38 3-5 seconds for the quarter mile made by James Drury of Montreal in 1901. The standard racing skate of the world was originated in Canada by J. K. McCullough, of Winnipeg, in his day the speedy champion of the world. It is simply a long steel blade with light steel supports screwed to the boots. He did not patent his idea, and it is now exclusively used in all important race meets. The racing skate is square ended, while the skate used by fancy skaters is rounded at the ends, much shorter and more substantially built. That is the kind of skate with which Louis Rubinstein of Montreal went over to St. Petersburg some time ago and easily wrested the fancy skating championship of the world from the best men from all over Europe. Incidentally he not only won the championship, but was arrested by secret police, and might have taken a trip to Siberia on some imaginary political charge, had not the British Ambassador come to his rescue. Since then trips to Russia for skating purposes have not been popular in Canada.

Snow Shoeing Peculiar to Canada.

Another sport which belongs absolutely to Canada is snow shoeing and in those parts of the country where there is sufficient snow it is extraordinarily popular. Naturally the speed and jumping records are owned in Canada. The snow shoe, like lacrosse, is a legacy from the Indian, and was, at first, as it is still in the outlying countries to the north, not a sport, but the only means of winter locomotion. It is practically confined to Quebec, Eastern Ontario and Manitoba, and a few other parts of the country, where sufficient snow falls. It is one of the most picturesque of sports, the snoeshoers wearing brilliant blanket-skirts with toques for their long tramps, and no prettier sight can be imagined than a gay crowd of young girls and young men on a tramp over the snow. The snow shoes are most exclusively made by Indians, many of whom make a good living out of the trade, as the demand almost invariably exceeds the supply, visitors to Canada being especially fond of securing a pair to take away as souvenirs.

Ski-ing Great Sport

A comparatively new sport in Canada, closely allied to snoe-shoeing is ski-ing. This is a particularly exciting Norwegian sport, which was introduced into Canada a few years ago, and became at once so popular that a number of clubs were formed in the big cities in the snow belt, who promptly bought up the visible supply of Norwegian instructors. One of the main hindrances to the sport is that it requires a good supply of mountains, or at least good hills, so that those unfortunate enough to live on the level cannot go in for it. Skiing is practically coasting on long runners fastened to the feet and it is very expensive sport, as it requires special outfits, while the skis,—long narrow strips of carefully selected ash—are not cheap. The principle of the thing is simply to pole up a hill, and then slide down again, and it must be a very expert ski-er, who gets off without frequent tumbles into the snowbanks. The best slides are built with "jumps," sudden declivities over the edges of which the descending ski-er jumps as far down the declivity as possible. Jumps of 80 feet have been recorded in Norway, but no such records have been approached in Canada. It is extremely difficult to make these long jumps on skis, and keep balance, the jumpers frequently landing in deep snow in a mess.

Horse Racing on Ice.

Another distinctly Canadian feature of Canadian winter sport is ice racing. This has practically grown up within the past quarter century, but has become so popular that there are few places of any importance which can reckon on cold weather and have a river or lake big enough for a quarter or half mile track that do not indulge in ice races every winter. The most famous ice meet in Canada is held annually at Ottawa, where the famous Cresceus, owned by George H. Ketchum, the champion trotter of the world, a few years ago, established an ice record of 2.13½, which competery little. It was about 1900 when it became obvious to many of our American home-seekers that our great West was geting a trifle small, according to their notions. In that year about twenty thousands Americans went over into Canada. Two years later, the army had reached fifty thousand in numbers. Last year, more than that many went across the line within three months fo the spring. At least seventy-five thousand wil this year leave the United States to go into North-West Canada, not to mention more than a hundred thousand more from from Europe. These figures are far from accuracy, for it is not claimed by the officials that hey get the name and record of every man moving over the line in these packed columns of the Great Trek. The figures stagger, and, indeed, their ethical import might well cause a certain confusion to our own government; yet there is no use in attempting to blind ourselves to the meaning of it, even though it represents a certain hardship to the United States. One able objector out in a widely circulated American periodical that this "wild land craze" is taking away from his commonwealth thousands of men, and causing the local banks much hardship. He opines that folk presently will realize that Iowa land is better than wild land, and so will come back home, even as lost sheep return. What utter folly! The truth is that the population of Iowa is thirty thousand less than it was two years ago, most of this loss occasioned by the Great Trek. That is not because Iowa lands are no longer good, but because they are no longer cheap.

Not a Matter of Sentiment.

There is little sentiment in these matters. I remember a magazine article which described the thrills experienced by a Russian Jew immigrant when he saw the top of the Statue of Liberty in New York Bay, so knowing that he was at last approaching America, the land of the tent horsemen declare to be equivalent to two minutes flat on a mile

SKI-ING, A NORWEGIAN SPORT.

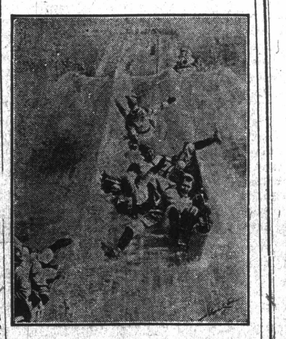
course in summer. This winter Montreal horsemen are going in for the sport for the first time, and are building an ice track by the simple expedient of flooding an ordinary race course, and letting the weather do the rest.

Ice Boating is Exciting

For exhilirating sport ice yachting is hard to beat and it is again almost peculiarly a Canadian sport. An ice yacht is simply a huge skate with a small platform and a big sail. On a clear ice expanse with a good breeze fabulous speed can be attained, the mystery of the thing being that the yacht will go faster than the wind blows them. It is most popular on the river and lake fronts of Ontario, as in Quebec and the far West the snow is generally too deep for it. The ice boat is built of three huge skates, with a wooden platform, and stays to prevent capsizing, with one mast and a leg of mutton sail, the steering being done by a skate at the rear, manipulated by a tiller. The boats are hard to handle safely, but wherever it is available ice boating is extraordinarily popular, especially on such ideal spots as the Bay at Toronto, and the water around Kingston.

Tobogganning Great Sport

While ice boating does not flourish where the snow is deep, there cannot be too much snow for the great Eastern Canadian sport of tobogganning, which is one of the most popular and attractive of all Canada's winter sports, and which is always one of the great show pieces for visitors. It started, of course, with boys coasting down snowy hill sides on flat sleds. As they grew up they remembered the sport they had, until the demand for it grew, and immense slides have been built in many places, where they form centres of attraction for the younger people every winter night, no matter how fierce the weather.. The best slides are of course on hill sides, but where Nature has neglected to supply these artificial chutes have been built at great expense. On some of the slides there are half a dozen or more narrow chutes, just wider than the toboggan, while at the famous Montreal Toboggan Slide—by all odds the largest in the world—the chute is over a mile in length, and when the ice is in good condition the toboggan travels that distance in less than a minute, and slides along the flat expanse at the bottom for a full half mile or more. There are six chutes at this slide, and races are not only of



TOBOGGANING IN MONTREAL.

frequent occurrence, but intensely exciting. Despite the tremendous speed of the descent accidents are almost unknown, a spill generally meaning a pitch into deep snow, and a good deal of mixed up fun. The tobogganers wear very much the same outfit as the snow shoers, and a slide in full blast is one of the most picturesque sights to be had in the Dominion.

This by no means exhausts the list of Canada's winter sports, but it is at least sufficient to show that the frosts which are feared by those who do not know what they mean are really a blessing to the country and make it what it is, the finest sporting country in the world, winter and summer.

PRINCE ALBERT LIBERALS HOLD BRILLIANT BANQUET

Important Addresses by Hon. Messrs. Calder and Lamont—Higher Education to Be Improved and Made Free to Every Child—Provincial University—Tax on Corporations, Land Companies, Etc

PRINCE ALBERT, Jan. 10.—Last evening a banquet was spread at the Queen's Hotel, and the delegates to the Liberal convention were guests of the city Liberals. Hon. Mr. McGuire presided and read a message from A. J. Bell, president of the City Liberal Association, who is a victim of la grippe, but who wrote congratulating the district Liberals on their choice of a candidate and rendering the prophecy that Mr. Turgeon would be elected by a majority of 100 or more. Senator Davis was also heard from. He was stuck on the C. N. R. at Kinistino, but wished all an enjoyable time. The chairman, in proposing the Provincial Government, said it was a young one, but in its first session it had given a good earnest of carrying out its pledges.

Mr. Calder Responds.

Hon. Mr. Calder,, in responding, expressed pleasure at being again in Prince Albert and spoke of the evidences of progress which he saw, and said its geographical position and its big lumber industries were bound to make it one of the best cities in the west within a few years. The city's representative, Hon. Mr. Lamont, had unbounded faith in its future, and from the way he talked at Regina, he evidently thought it the only place in the universe. The Provincial Government was a young one, and the people were perhaps taking some chances in placing the government of the province in their hands. Mr. Haultain was a very capable man, and had given the territories a good government, and the Liberals were sorry that Mr. Haultain's own action made it impossible for them to continue to support him. Mr. Calder paid a tribute to his colleagues, and dealt with the education problem of the provinces, intimating that at the next session legislation would be introduced placing high schools and collegiate institutes on a better basis, and making it possible for every child to attend these free of charge. (Cheers.)

University Coming.

A university was also necessary, and a university bill would probably be brought down next session. He warned his hearers that a universley could not be made in a day, but said it would probably be established as quickly as possible, and would give an opportunity equal to any in the Dominion. The finances of the province were in splendid shape, and more money would be spent this year, especially in roads and bridges, in which this district, he understood, had been starved for several years past. Although th finances were in a very favorable condition, it was the intention of the government to still enhance the moneys in hand by the imposition of a tax on corporations, land companies, railways, etc.

Lamont Eulogizes Turgeon.

Mr. Lamont also responded, thanking the gathering for drinking to the Provincial Government, but saying their appreciation would be better expressed when they sent Mr. Turgeon to represent them at Regina. Sir Wilfrid Laurier once said it had always been his endeavor to get into the public life of Canada the brightest intellects and the brightest characters in the Dominion. He had the same desire, and by electing Mr. Turgeon, Prince Albert district would choose as their representative one of the brightest intellects and highest characters in the province. (Cheers.)

Discussing the question of public improvements referred to by Mr. Calder, Mr. Lamont recalled first that in 1902 Thomas McKay and Mr. Donaldson went through the country opposing Mr. Haultain because he was not giving this part of the country its share of money expended on public works.

The figures show this was true, for in the last three years of the Haultain administration less than $10,000 was spent in Prince Albert district, comprising 6,500 square miles. In Whitewood, Grenfell, Moosomin and Wolseley, comprising altogether only 5,000 square miles, but returning ten Haultain supporters, $10,625 was spent, while Mr. Haultain's own constituency received $41,362. The Scott government was endeavoring to distribute improvements more equally, and in sixteen months had spent $16,000 and had appropriated $50,000 for a bridge at Prince Albert. That sum might not be enough, but whatever was required for a traffic attachment to the C. N. R. bridge would be granted.

Responding to the toast, "The Candidate," Mr. Turgeon made a stirring, fighting speech, declaring his allegiance to Liberal principles and calling upon his fellow Liberals to do their utmost by fair means to win another victory for the party.

The Liberal party was toasted and speeches in response were made by Hon. T. H. McGuire and Senator Davis, who arrived at midnight. "The Agricultural Interests" and "Our Guests" were also on the toast list.

GRIN GROWERS TO MEET IN FEBRUARY

Big Convention of Saskatchewan Association to Start in Saskatoon Feb. 20th.

The Provincial executive of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association was held in the Clayton Hotel on Thursday evening, the following members being present: Hon. Pres., Hon. W. R. Motherwell; Pres. E. M. Hopkins, of Moose Jaw, and Messrs. Simpson, of Regina; John Millan, of Indian Head; and W. J. Stevenson, of Indian Head, Secretary pro tem.

The executive was called to decide the date and make arrangements for the open annual convention, which will be at Saskatoon on Wednesday, Feb. 20th. The resolution committee will meet on the 19th. The secretaries of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association and the Alberta Farmers' Association are to be notified of the dates of the convention and asked to send representatives, and meanwhile circulars are being prepared regarding the convention for distribution among the affiliated associations.

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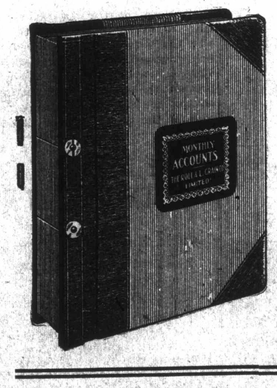

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