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FITNESS AND AMATEUR SPORT IN CANADA

(Prepared in the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch, Health and Welfare Canada, Ottawa.)

As its title implies, Canada's Fitness and Amateur Sport Program is concerned with the whole range of human physical activity and seeks to give encouragement to the "jogger" as well as the *élite* athlete. Its aim is both to increase the number of participants at all levels of competitive and non-competitive activity and to improve their skills.

The Program began in December 1961 with the proclamation of the federal Fitness and Amateur Sport Act. Under this Act, which is administered by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, up to \$5 million is provided by the Federal Government to encourage, promote and develop fitness and amateur sport. Recently, however, there have been a number of significant changes.

Since 1969 a process of review has been under way. The result has been an increased commitment by the Canadian Government to fitness and amateur sport. In January 1973, the Speech from the Throne announced that the funds available for the Program would be gradually increased over the next three years, to \$20 million by 1975-76. To enable the Program to cover the total population more effectively, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate has been divided into two divisions: Sport Canada, which is to concentrate on the competitive aspects of sport at the national and international level, and Recreation Canada, which will be concerned with the development of mass participation in physical activity.

There have been changes in the style of the Program as well. An attempt is being made to make it more "people-oriented". The distribution of grants to national associations and other program-operating agencies is now complemented by an effort to reach the Canadian people directly. A number of "spin-off" organizations have been established to handle well-defined problems. Sport-demonstration tours have crisscrossed the country. Aid is available for athletes with proved ability.

The objectives of the national Fitness and Amateur Sport Program are listed in Section 3 of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act

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(Chapter 59, Statute of Canada, 1960-61). Under this section, the Minister of National Health and Welfare is given authority specifically to:

- (a) provide assistance for the promotion and development of Canadian participation in national and international amateur sport;
- (b) provide for the training of coaches and such other personnel as may be required for the purposes of the Act;
- (c) provide bursaries and fellowships to assist in the training of necessary personnel;
- (d) undertake or assist in research or surveys in respect of fitness and amateur sport;
- (e) arrange for national and regional conferences designed to promote and further the objects of the Act;
- (f) provide for the recognition of achievement in respect of fitness and amateur sport by the grant or issue of certificates, citations or awards of merit;
- (g) prepare and distribute information relating to fitness and amateur sport;
- (h) assist, co-operate with, and enlist any group interested in furthering the objects of the Act;
- (i) co-ordinate federal activities relating to the encouragement, promotion and development of fitness and amateur sport in co-operation with any other departments or agencies of the Government of Canada carrying on such activities;
- (j) undertake such other projects or programs, including the provision of assistance therefore, in respect of fitness and amateur sport as are designed to promote and further the objects of the Act.

Fitness is defined, from the point of view of the Program, as the state in which a person is able to function at his physical and mental best; amateur sport, as any athletic activity engaged in solely for recreation, fitness or pleasure and not as a means of livelihood.

The federal Program There are four main parts to the federal Program:

Grants and assistance to national associations, agencies and particular segments of the population;

organizations established and supported by the Program to meet specialized and well-defined needs;

special events such as the Canada Games and promotional tours;

services provided by the Department of National Health and Welfare that are largely of a technical and informational nature.

(1) Grants

Federal funds are available to over 70 national sport-governing bodies and Program agencies operating in the field. Grants are also available to athletes of national calibre who wish to continue their education while pursuing an athletic career. Certain elements of the Canadian population, such as the native peoples, also receive assistance.

Grants to national associations now total over \$3.5 million a year, and are used to strengthen administrative structures, expand the quality and quantity of leadership and develop competitive programs.

Much of this money is used for assistance to athletes travelling to national championships and international events such as the Olympics, the Pan-American Games and the British Commonwealth Games. To strengthen Canada's sport structures, assistance is also available for travel to executive and annual meetings. Canada is such a vast country that a special effort must be made to ensure that meetings and competitions include representatives from all parts of it.

Special attention is now being given to coaching and technical development. The national sport-governing bodies are being encouraged to hire technical directors and develop special programs.

Program-operating agencies such as the Boys Clubs of Canada and the YMCA find these federal grants to be particularly useful in training competent leaders.

Young athletes who wish to continue competing while obtaining their education are encouraged to do so by the availability of athletic grants-in-aid. Awards from \$600 to \$2000 are made to athletes

attending the country's high schools, community colleges and universities so that they may continue training during the summer instead of seeking employment to pay for their education. Recipients are recommended by their national sport-governing body and a National Selection Committee. Athletes with definite medal potential may obtain extra assistance for the increased coaching, testing and use of facilities that they require to be successful in international competition.

Canada's native peoples also receive grants so that they can train and hire leaders and develop their own recreation and fitness programs.

(2) Organizations

As a result of the studies carried out in 1969, it became clear that a special effort would be required in a selected group of problem areas. As a result, a number of organizations were set up outside of the Program so that they might be able to operate with a degree of flexibility not normally available within governmental structures. The four main organizations are:

(a) The Administration Centre for Sport and Recreation

Thirty-seven associations are housed at this special centre in the effort to provide them with a continuing and professional basis of administration. The salary for an executive director is provided, as is the office space. Secretarial and clerical services are available as well.

(b) Hockey Canada

This organization was established in 1969 to prepare and manage Canada's national hockey team and to develop the game of hockey across the country.

(c) Sport Participation Canada

Using the motto "ParticipAction", this company employs the media and highly-developed marketing techniques to persuade Canadians to be physically active during their leisure time.

(d) Canadian Coaching Association

This organization is seeking to upgrade the coaching network throughout Canada.

(3) Special programs and events

(a) Canada Games

The Canada Games are a means for providing a first taste of national-level competition to promising young athletes. Originally held at Quebec City in February 1967, they are now held in a different city every two years, alternating as winter and summer events. The Canada Games bring together approximately 3,500 athletes from across the nation organized into provincial teams. Indicative of the success of this program is the fact that many of the provinces now stage provincial games. Another offshoot is the Arctic Games, which are held every two years for athletes who live north of the 60th Parallel. Other benefits of the Canada Games are the provision of high-quality facilities in the host cities, as well as the encouragement of national unity.

(b) Sport-demonstration tours

In 1969, Harry Jerome, a world-record-holding sprinter, led a group of athletes across Canada in an effort to show the fun and skills of a number of sports. The success of this effort has led to the continuation of these sport tours during the summer months through the use of community and town fairs and exhibitions. The demonstration tour is also a useful medium for the Canada Fitness Award.

(c) Canada Fitness Award

The Canada Fitness Award was developed and launched in October 1970, and is based on six fitness-performance tests that give boys and girls from seven to 17 a general idea of their general physical condition. The main objective of the fitness award is to stimulate, encourage and motivate Canadian youth to strive for excellence and reach higher levels of fitness that will pay dividends to them and Canada in the future. Bronze, silver and gold crests are awarded on a basis of the degree of achievement. In October 1972, the millionth Canada Fitness Award Crest was presented.

(4) Services

(a) Information

This operation consists of disseminating to the Canadian public information relating to the Fitness and Amateur Sport Program and the services it provides. Press releases and interpretative articles

are prepared for newspapers and various magazines and journals. Displays are prepared and exhibited at national events. A clearing-house service is maintained for information on fitness, recreation and amateur sport in Canada. A calendar of national sports events is published three times a year listing the locations and dates of clinics, championships, annual meetings and international events attended by Canadians. From time to time, radio programs and television clips are prepared on aspects of the Program.

(b) Consultants

The prime responsibility of the consultant services involves a close working relation with some 70 national organizations conducting the many sports and recreation programs currently receiving federal support. This includes advice on the continuing programs of the associations and assessment of projects for which federal assistance has been provided. The consultants, with their special skills and backgrounds, provide a direct link between the Federal Government and the sports and recreation programs conducted across the country.

(c) Fitness

In December 1972, a National Conference on Fitness and Health was held, heralding a new emphasis on fitness by the Program. Two consultants have been added to the staff to assist in the developing of fitness programs throughout the country. Their efforts are being directed toward the providing of information, the development of a home-fitness test, developing personnel with an expertise in this area and advising on employee-fitness programs.

National Advisory
Council on Fitness
and Amateur Sport

The Minister of National Health and Welfare is advised on policy matters by the National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport. The Council consists of 30 persons appointed for terms of up to three years, chosen for their interest and experience in activities supported by the Fitness and Amateur Sport Program. At least one member must come from each province.

Council membership includes persons with experience in national and international competition, physical educators, physicians, leaders in community recreation and others whose special experience can be an asset to its work.

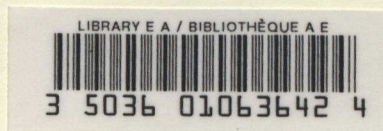
The Council, in its advisory capacity, concentrates its efforts to the aspects of strategic planning.

Federal-provincial
relations

The field of fitness and amateur sport is one that is shared by the three levels of government in Canada — federal, provincial and municipal. Many of the provincial programs began and were strengthened through cost-sharing agreements with the Federal Government which remained in force until 1970. While this formal arrangement is no longer in existence, co-operation is maintained on projects of mutual interest such as the Canada Games. Regional offices are maintained in Vancouver and Winnipeg, and there is a desk in Ottawa for the Atlantic Provinces. Special grants are given to the less-advantaged regions in the country.

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A regional activities that have not yet been established in the Atlantic Provinces. It was this matter that was discussed at the meeting in Ottawa in 1970. The regional offices were established in 1970 and have since that time been working to develop and coordinate the regional activities. The regional offices are now in a position to provide a more coordinated and efficient service to the provinces. The regional offices are now in a position to provide a more coordinated and efficient service to the provinces.