

Will be in on the "hot" discussion

25 Jan 1964

**OCA past president from Lindsay  
critical of professional inroads  
into former strictly amateur game**

The action of two crack and top ranking curlers from Western Canada "splitting the spoils of the loot" in a recent Calgary bonspiel when the two opposing finalists agreed before the championship game to take and divide the top prize of four automobiles, before the game was played, has caused a furore in curling circles.

Past President E. Neill Gregory of the Lindsay Curling Club, who is also recognized as one of the most aggressive and progressive Past presidents of the Ontario Curling Association, has been named a special delegate from the OCA to the annual meeting of the Dominion Curling Association to be held in Charlestown, P.E.I. He will be an interested spectator of the Dominion Brier bonspiel and he will no doubt valiantly voice his opinions (and the opinion of the OCA) at the annual conclave regarding the action of these curlers.

The writer of "Sweep" buttonholed E. Neill Gregory in an effort to get his opinion on the much talked of and hitherto unheard action of Skip Ernie Richardson. He was reluctant to give an opinion but finally came forth with statements, in which he definitely criticized the inroads being made towards professionalism in the traditionally amateur game of curling. In part he said, "Curlers play to win the game but not to humble their opponents, and every game ends with a hearty handshake of good will between winners and opponents. No curler deliberately breaks a rule of the game."

"From time immemorial curling has been a truly amateur sport. No curler plays the game for profit, to himself or anyone else." Mr. Gregory emphasized his opinion that if it is deemed necessary, desirable and expedient to establish

a uniform code of rules of eligibility for participation; for ethics and so on in competition, it would be done".

Mr. Gregory added that an effort will be made at the Dominion Curling Association meeting to bring in a set of rules regarding eligibility of amateur curlers. "For instance, first prize should not have a value of more than ~~\$250 per~~ person or one thousand dollars per rink", he said, adding, "I think this is pretty generous".

Objection was also voiced by Mr. Gregory against the practice of skips going away outside their own home club territory

to pick up promising young curlers. "This looks too much like the practice of the National Hockey League".

### **Plenty Of Time**

Past president Gregory mentioned the fact that in the Canadian west farmers have plenty of time to curl. "They farm all summer, make big money with their grain and then in the winter they either go to Florida or California or spend their entire time curling at home. In this regard they are in a class by themselves, but I think they go too far when they organise foursomes and go out for the big money, the cars etc. and I am definitely opposed to the manner in which Richardson decided to accept two cars as prizes in a recent western bonspiel and was in cahoots with his opponent who also accepted two cars. The fans do not pay their money to see this kind of frame-up", he said.

"If these western pros want to endorse products, play for big money, accept cars — then this should be done apart from the Dominion or Ontario Curling Association competitions. Perhaps they should set up a preferred league for themselves but let us not have them professionalize the game for all bona fide amateurs". concluded E. Neil Gregory.

Richardson and Gervais were finalists in a Calgary bonspiel in which the main reward were four automobiles and television sets. Before playing they secretly agreed to split the loot so there would be no losers. This was not explained to the 5,000 who paid money to watch the game. They thought they were witnessing keenly contested games, when they actually saw eight men simply going through the motions of curling.