

Sweep

Forty-eight women curlers and 96 men curlers participated in the opening of curling season at the Peel Street rink last week.

President Marnie Sutton and President Stan Pitts, as well as other officers were on hand to see that everything went "according to Hoyle". There was a clatter and chatter as old acquaintances were renewed and new friendships formed. Many new faces were noticed and the personnel of the membership has undergone many changes, but enthusiasm was bubbling over and everything looks well for a successful season.

To use a well-worn adjective, the rink looked "lovely". "Spic and span" to be exact. Down and upstairs lounges have been treated to liberal paint-

ing — the materials have not been spared and the two club rooms never looked better and brighter. The "rock garden" was admired by old and young curlers.

Icemaker Ralph Padgett was congratulated on a wonderful job and caretaker Thibadeau was also complimented on the general appearance of the club in general. President Pitts and Vice-Presidents Lyons and Connolly were on hand to help iron out any first-night difficulties.

What a difference from the opening night of December 11, 1876, which history records as having been something real special. The first games were played on two sheets of natural ice in a rink on Victoria Park.

Later on a new rink was erected at the south-east corner of William and Russell Streets and in a few years the club had grown to such proportions that a new and larger rink with four sheets of ice was built on the present site on Peel Street. It was the day of natural ice but winter set in earlier than in the past few years.

Whether climatic conditions have been disarranged by weapons of war exploding in the heavens or not, the seasons have changed!

Later as the membership continued to swell, two more sheets were added. The clothing of curlers was different but most curlers wore tams with red-top tassels and plaid brims and sweaters of all kinds were generally worn under a suit-coat, for it was generally very cold. Some wore rubbers and others overshoes and a real Scotchman decorated his waist-line with a red scarf.

Some years there were as many as 60 rinks and once or

twice there were so many players that there were five men to a team. At one time 12 ends constituted a game and later on 10 ends. Many of the best curlers played the game of points in the afternoon, a game recognized by the O.A.C. where the curlers practiced the draws, the chap and lie, the running shots, drawing through potts, raises and guards.

Lindsay was a great curling town, and it is yet but with a different type of enthusiasm. Lindsay won many awards and inter-club matches were held with Peterboro, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, Beaverton, Cannington, Oshawa, Orillia and Toronto Granites.

LARGEST 'SPIEL

The largest bonspiel was the week the club used six sheets of ice in the Peel Street rink and three in the skating rink on Lindsay Street South, when the rinks included one from Winnipeg. All visiting rinks shipped in their curling rocks.

The clubhouse consisted of a long, narrow room with smaller rooms at the east and west ends. Two small wooden stoves burning wood were used in the small rooms and coal in the pot-belly stove in the main room. A drink of water was secured from a tap close to the stove and everyone drank out of the same old battered and rusty tin cup which was fastened to a chain.

The coal-bin was located in the cellar and entrance was gained through a trap door in the main room while the wood was piled on one side of the steps leading down to the ice surface. If a stick had to be chopped or split, this was done on the wooden steps.

It was a great club. Every year the curlers walked in a body to attend the annual divine service and they turned out 100 strong and the preacher stirred their emotions as he spoke directly to the club and warned them to beware of "falling in slippery places" — meaning more than ordinary ice.

It was customary to hold an annual curler's banquet when it was not unusual to have over

200 men extend their legs under tables which groaned with the best edibles the church women could provide. There was even time in the busy schedule to hold challenge games when the Presbyterians played the Methodists and Anglicans played the winners.

What spirit! What wonderful fellowship!

The Lindsay club was known and respected from the Pacific to the Atlantic and rinks from Lindsay played several times in Montreal and Halifax, as well as in Winnipeg. So great was the enthusiasm of the Lindsay populace that excursion trains were run from Toronto to support Lindsay's Ontario Tankard rinks and telegrams were sent back to Lindsay over the CPR wires for the home folk. T.C. Maychett, a curling devotee was the CPR ticket agent and did the work gratuitously. Lindsay newspapers ran the score end-by-end and headlined the champions. On more than one occasion torch-light parades gathered at the railway depot to welcome conquering heroes home.

Compare these grand old days of curling to the game and the curlers of today. Well — perhaps a comparison would be odious, perhaps it would be complimentary to the game and the exponents of curling today. However as the Scottish poet said: "A man's a man for a' that."