Sports-And One Thing or Another

By FRANK MANN HARRIS

In times of rising prices and food shortages, a writer enjoys one great advantage over his fellow citizens. If he has nothing else to exercise his teeth on, he can always eat his own words; although we wouldn't really recommend the custom as either very nourishing or even satisfying.

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This is by way of saying that we find it necessary to take back something we wrote; and at the same time tender apologies to an athlete whom we have been cruelly wronging in the past. Like practically every sports-cobbler on the Continent, we have been poking fun at the pretensions of Primo Carnera as a wrestler! and even hinting that his adversaries must be taking great care in their handling of the Ambling Alp, for fear that some night he would snap in two.

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Now we learn, on good authority, that such jibes were entirely uncalled-for. Paying a visit recently to these parts was our old friend Ivan Mikailof, the man who did more to make large sections of Ontario wrestling-conscious than any other individual, and one who knows what he is talking to. When we hinted that Mr. Carnera must require a good deal of protection in his bouts, Mikailoff scouted the idea. "You are all wet," he told us. "Dat Carnera was a wrestler for five ten years before he ever went into dat crazy boxing racket. He can wrestle like nobady's business, and don't need anybody to carry him or protect him whatsoever."

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So our humble apologies to Carnera for the foul wrongs we have been doing him in the past. We are glad to hear that his wrestling activities are paying him around two thousand dollars a week — and that he's actually getting the dough — which is a lot more than he did, in spite of the big gates he drew, when mixed up with what Mikailoff terms, "dat crazy boxing racket".

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ADD DEFINITIONS. A Military Expert is a man who can assure the public, with a perfectly straight face, that the atomic bomb has made navies, armies and air forces obsolete and then, with just as straight a face, solemnly recommend that we should spend double what we are doing adding to our military strength.

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It is some time since we saw a hockey game in the fair city of Montreal; but they tell us that there is an atmosphere of gloom down around The Forum that you could easily cut with a knife. For years Les Canadiens have been top dogs in pro hockey; and even when the Maple Leafs knocked them loose from the Stanley Cup last spring their loyal supporters put it down as more or less of a fluke.

But it's funny what a difference just a few months can make, especially in sport. At this moment the Frenchmen are seriously threatening to drop out of the bottom of the league — and only the weakness of the Chicago Black Hawks' inner-guard keeps the Montrealers out of the cellar. Now, with Toe Blake — one of their few remaining spark pulgs — out of it indefinitely, their plight is a sorry one — in fact a man selling crying towels would probably find a ready and highly profitable market down there, especially among the French-Canadian rooters, who really take their hockey seriously and their losses the hard way.

And a gent by the name of Boucher must be having many a quiet chuckle to himself. You will recall the jeers and sneers which greated Frankie's prediction, at the start of the season, that the Montrealers wouldn't make the playoffs. Well —in their first eight games this season, Canadiens have emerged with just exactly four points — one win and two ties — making it seem as though maybe Mr. Boucher wasn't as far off the beam as some of us who laughed at his "screwey" prediction.

* * *

And maybe you've heard the one about the fruit and vegetable dealer who was recently observed closing his establishment for the night. A friend who was looking on, noticed something unusual in the dealer's actions and questioned him. "It's all right," was the reply. "The way things are these days I put the cabbage in the register, and leave the cash in the window."

* * *

Racketeers — sure-thing artists — have always been with us; in fact we think it was Kipling who once surmised that the real secret of Cheops' pyramid was probably that "the contractor did Cheops out of several millions." Now, on the authority of a recent magazine article, we learn that even the sacred game of BINGO isn't free from the gentry who always like to have an ace in the hole.

* * *

It seems that there are two favourite methods of taking the element of chance out of BINGO. In one of these, the players come to the game carrying a supply of little numbers exactly resembling those used on the official cards. As the numbers are called by the operator of the game, they simply paste the proper ones on their cards until they have a whole row of winners. The checking is generally done so hastily that the substitutions are seldom noted.

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In the other plan, the connivance of the checker is necessary. The racketeer hollers "Bingo" then the checker simply comes over and calls off — not the numbers actually on the racketeer's card, but winning ones which he has memorized as the game was progressing. There are other schemes too — in fact the author of the article says that when any man — or woman either — wins too consistently at BINGO, the chances are that there's dirty work at the crossroads. And so another illusion is shattered! You're not even safe at a Church entertainment.

A Substitute for the Dog Team?—The Eskimo in the above picture looks rather modern, seated at the wheel of an up-to-date tractor. But in many ways these people still follow the same customs which have prevailed in Arctic regions for centuries. Life among the Eskimos—and the work the Canadian Government is doing to help them—is strikingly pictured in the National Film Board movie "Eskimo Summer".

"Eskimo Summer"

It would probably surprise a great many people to learn that quite a few of our so-called "modern" inventions and gadgets are really old—and centuries old at that. Take our heating, for instance. Now this is supposed to be the acme of modernity. But, if you care to look at "Eskimo Summer," a National Film Board film dealing with the Eskimo of Canada's eastern Arctic region, you will see that oil heating has been used by these peoples for countless centuries. And, even further, the Eskimo use oil for lighting as well.

In case you're interested in using oil—a la Eskimo—you first take a stone and grind and polish it until you have converted it into a shallow, open dish. Next you gather dried moss and fashion it into a wick, which you place in your dish. Then, you obtain some whale oil, which you pour into the dish around your wick. And there you are, all set, not only to heat your igloo (or skin tent in the summer time), but to light it as well.

Ancient and Modern

"Eskimo Summer" also brings to light and contrasts the ancient and modern in present day Eskimo life. Alongside the stone whale-oil lamp you will often see a primus stove; again, the neighbour of the man who uses a primitive fish trap will probably be using a white man's net; and, in matters of transportation, diesel-powered fishing boats will be seen pulled up on shore alongside the old fashioned buoyant skin kayaks.

Staff of Life

Summer time in the eastern arctic is a short but busy season. The bitter cold of winter is never far from mind, and the men and women work feverishly to lay in a supply of food for the lean months of blizzard and isolation. The menfolk and the older boys are constantly busy, trapping and spearing fish, and hunting caribou, white whale, polar bear, seal and walrus. The women are kept just as busy, drying the fish as fast as the men catch them. Another of their jobs—and how many of their white cousins would envy them?—is pressing out oil from the whale blubber with a 'ulu" knife, to provide the winter's fuel.

The mighty whale, indeed, is in many ways a staff of life to the eastern Eskimo. To catch a whale is a communal effort, and it is logical that the community should share its benefits. The "corpse" is evenly divided between all the families participating in the hunt, and each section is then put to various uses. Food and oil come from the blubber, as we have mentioned, but if you are looking for an extra special delicacy, there is nothing more enjoyable than a juicy wedge of the whale's skin—at least, so the Eskimo say.

An Annual Event

Perhaps the isolation of the Eskimo from the rest of the world makes them such cheerful, jolly fellows when they do manage to come into contact with other human beings. Such occasions are rare, but are looked forward to eagerly for months ahead. One such occasion is the annual arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company ship the ("Nascopie"—the ship that made this trip for so many years — was unfortunately wrecked in the fall of 1947). In the film we see the "Nascopie" stopping at every settlement along the coast. The men aboard her, R.C.C.M., doctors, missionaries and traders—are all as eager to see the Eskimo as the Eskimo are to see them. As the ship lands, the Eskimo come forward, and work manfully unloading the lumber, gasoline and traders' supplies. The R.C.M.P. and doctors check on health, take out the sick and injured, and learn of new problems and difficulties which have arisen in the lives of these copper-skinned natives.

Yearly Shopping Spree

The visit to the trading post is another occasion for cheer and excitement. Furs are exchanged for wooden sticks, worth fifty cents each, and these sticks are regarded as money. With the sticks the Eskimo buy their supplies of rifles, ammunition, traps, tea, flour, sugar, clothing, matches, and even toys for the children.

All in all the Eskimo are seen to be a resourceful and self-reliant people, who have made their homes in what is possibly the most rugged and forbidding region in the world. Far from being dull, they have shown surprising ability in mastering the arts of the white man. "Eskimo Summer" gives an interesting colour picture of these people, and includes an animated map showing the precise location of their territory in Canada's eastern arctic. The film is now being shown on the rural circuit film programmes in Ontario counties.

Hard Times

"These sausages you sent me are meat at one end and bread-crumbs at the other," said Mrs. Andrews.

"Yes, madam," replied the butcher: "in these hard times it is difficult to make both ends meat."

It's Expected

Clerk (to manager of store): "When I sold that lamp why did you want me to bill him extra for the shade, electric cord, and a bulb?"

Manager: "Oh, he's our local automobile dealer."

Learn to Parachute Starting in Reverse

It has been pointed out that starting at the bottom and working up is a pretty good rule, unless the undertaking is that of digging a well. Parachuting might quite reasonably be classed as another trade or profession which is impractical to "learn from the ground up," says a science writer in the Christian Science Monitor.

However, it is quite possible to start a parachute jump from ground level and without the aid of any type of aircraft or balloon.

* * *

To overcome one of the principal hazards attendant on novice (and other) parachute jumps from heights —the question of whether or not the chute will open properly after the leap into space—a device has been worked out whereby the parachutist starts his jump from good old Mother Earth.

The novice dons his parachute and harness and stands on a grilled platform. Under the grill a powerful motor-driven fan springs into action, sending up a powerful vertical blast of air. The current fills the parachute and as the cloth mushrooms out above the student's head, he feels himself jerked off his feet and into the air.

* * *

Up and up he goes until his weight exactly counterbalances the force of the vertical column of air, whereupon the student begins his descent just as though he had stepped from a plane. He learns the tricks of handling a parachute, working the shroud lines to jockey for a perfect landing, getting his training with virtually all of the hazards of the more familiar kind of parachute jumping eliminated.

Foreign Trade

Suppose we decided to forget all about this headache of foreign trade, as some misguided people suggest, and try to live within ourselves, what would it mean? asks The Financial Post.

H. V. Lush, president of the Canadian Exporters Association, answered that question very plainly recently. With no importing or exporting, he said, immediately 784,000 Canadians would lose their jobs and wage and salary earnings would shrink $30,000,000 weekly.

That would be the direct loss. What would be the effect of such a blow on all other industries, other jobs and other payrolls can only be imagined.

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