Sports-And One Thing or Another

By FRANK MANN HARRIS

For the past couple of seasons most of the other National Hockey League clubs have been loudly beefing about allegedly illegal tactics used by the Maple Leafs. So the other day a Toronto paper published some action-pictures taken during a Leafs-Rangers game, clearly showing that the New Yorkers were using precisely the same tactics that they, and the others, had been complaining about.

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Just why the paper should have gone to this trouble, we really cannot say. Any competent observer of hockey, as it is played today, knows right well that if ever the rules against illegal hooking and holding were strictly enforced they'd have to double the size of all the penalty-coops, and that most games would be largely played with an average of about three players a side on the ice.

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What is really irking those other "Big League" teams, in our opinion, is the fact that the Leafs are considerably smoother in their use of such tactics, and don't get caught in the act as often as the clumsier ones.

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There may be a reason for this state of affairs; or the "hook check" —which is simply keeping an opponent out of action under the guise of reaching for the puck—was brought to its finest flower of perfection by "Happy" Day, now coach of the Maple Leafs. Playing on the same team with men like Red Horner, King Clancy, Chuck Conacher and other rough-and ready operators, Day had the reputation of being an exceptionally clean player. And while it is undoubtedly true that he never performed any great amount of bodily mayhem on his opponents, what he used to do to their morale is something else again!

* * *

Deceivingly powerful — he had more strength in his arms than almost any athlete we've ever known—Day could hook an enemy out of the play, and keep him under restraint long enough for a Leaf attack to get organized, so smoothly that, unless you were specifically looking for it, you'd never notice what was being done. Too, the innocent expression on his face when the maddened "hookee" took a swat at him—and so got himself penalized — was especially maddening. He was a real artist at it, make no mistake about that; and while "Happy" was—and is — his generally accepted nickname, "Clarence the Clutch" was what some of his disgruntled opponents used to call him.

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But for all that, there's little doubt that there's far too much of this hooking and holding today, both in professional and amateur hockey, and that it's doing a lot to spoil the game for spectators. Except in very rare instances, there's no occasion for a player to raise his stick higher than his waist; and if the officials would make the boys keep their sticks down where they belong, we'd see a lot more hockey, and a lot less of what resembles a "scrum" in English rugger.

* * *

This is not a book-review column, which is probably just as well, because we generally get round to reading a worth-while book anywhere from 3 to 5 years after it has gone out of print. Still, to all theatre fans who remember the great days of Montgomery and Stone, we recommend — if you haven't already done so — reading ROLLING STONE, in which Fred Stone tells the story of his life in a highly interesting manner.

* * *

Stone was probably one of the greatest natural athletes who ever lived. As good a judge as James J. Corbett told him he was good enough to be a champion boxer, but advised against it. He played baseball well enough to be a big-leaguer had he so chosen; and could hold his own with the best at trap-shooting, roping, rodeo work — anything, in fact, he had a notion of taking up. Nor does he tell of such things in any way of self-praise, simply as happenings along the way.

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His skating experience is of interest to Canadians. He first tried that sport while on a visit to Toronto—and didn't do so well at it. Years later he had the notion of doing a figure skating act on the stage, and set out to master the art; and inside a few weeks had done so to an amazing extent, in fact the act was one of the hits of the show.

* * *

You see, what nobody had told him was that the skates he tried in Toronto were of the hockey variety — with the long straight blades — and that even Barbara Ann Scott or Sonja Henie would have a hard time cutting many fancy figures on them!

★

And Plenty

"Love makes the world go round."

"Yes, but it takes money to square it."

Young Canada Carries On!—And such carryings-on! Some of the older folks may say. Still, it's lots of fun for the younger folks, and probably not any sillier-looking than the square-dance, the one-step or the Charleston appeared to oldsters of bygone eras. It's a scene from CANADA DANCES, the National Film Board picture illustrating what a great part dancing has played—and is still playing—in the development of our Nation's social life.

Dancing's Fun for Young and Old

"Victory Day, New Year's Eve or plain high spirits, whatever the occasion, if it makes you happy, tradition will get you. You'll dance."

These are the opening words of David Catton, the commentator who speaks to you from the screen as the film "Canada Dances" unwinds before your eyes.

"Canada Dances," a National Film Board production which will be seen in many rural Ontario communities this winter, is the story of dancing in Canada. In many respects, we in Canada are lucky, for with our divergent backgrounds we have inherited almost all known forms of the dance. Listen again to the commentator:

"It doesn't matter how you dance, who you dance with or where you dance. Once you're in the mood, you'll dance! You don't have to learn. It's as easy as breathing. You shake your shoulders, beat your feet, link hands or arms—and let 'er rip."

"In it's most perfect form, the dance becomes art. Ballet's richness of color, music and precise movement is carefully thought out in advance—none of this spur of the moment stuff. For ballet, like the tribal dance from which it grew, expresses not only joy and celebration, but man's mystical beliefs, his hopes, his fears—his life."

Canada Has Both

There you have the extremes: the happy-go-lucky, informal and spirited dance, and the serious, symbolic ritual dance. In Canada we have them both. And the "in-between" dances? We have an abundance of these too.

In Canada's early days the nomadic Indians developed elaborate ritual dances for the purpose of imploring the spirits of rain and good hunting for food, the spirit of war for victory. Their prayers were the beat of tomtom and moccasined feet.

The early pioneers, both British and French, carried in their hearts the traditions of the lands they left. In their settlements, after the hardships of the day were over, they joined hands in the steps and melodies of the reel, the jig, the quadrille and the passepied. Today these dances are as much alive as they were one hundred years ago.

From Overseas

Later settlers, among them the Scandinavians, Finns, Ukrainians, Chinese, Dutch and Poles, also came to till Canadian soil. They, too, brought their dances. Happy dances, rythmical, colorful and varied.

All these dances flourish today in the countryside, and even in the industrial cities. But the industrial age, bringing with it the roar and speed of transportation, the whistle and shriek of factory, the chatter of machines, has produced yet another form of dancing, "jitterbugging."

The dance of the cities is like life in the cities: it is tricky, nervous and fast. It is symbolic of the clatter of street cars, the jumping pulse of traffic lights, elevators, skyscrapers, timeclocks, assembly lines and typewriters. They get the "city-slicker" in a groove—a groove that fits him for the dance he has come to know best.

But — whatever the step, and wherever it is done, it is still dancing. And dancing, as "Canada Dances" points out, is as old as man himself.

Michael, One-Time King of Romania

King Mihai (or Michael) of Romania, who abdicated a few weeks ago, was born twenty-six years ago, son of Carol, who is now in exile in Portugal, and of Helen, who was a Greek princess; was educated in the palace in Bucharest, along with twelve commoners picked from various walks of life to be his companions, first came to the throne when he was not quite six years old; his father, Carol, had abdicated to pursue his life with Magda Lupescu. A regency ruled, and Mihai was left to his toys and pony. When Mihai was nine Carol came back to the throne, displacing the boy. In the early days of the recent war young Mihai became king for the second time, when Carol fled again; The Nazis were now in effective control of Romania. In 1944 when the victorious Russians were driving into Romania, Mihai locked up the pro-Nazi Premier in a vault and switched his nation to the Allied side. For eight days he actually was ruler; then the Russians took over, making him a figure-head once more. He amused himself by recklessly fast driving of automobiles and speedboats, almost tore the wings off the light training plane in which he learned to fly because he insisted on simulating dive bombing.

Sonja Henie won the figure skating championship for Norway in the 1928, 1932 and 1936 Winter Olympics.

One-Hand Driving A Serious Menace

In the hue and cry after the various hazards of motoring that seriously affect life and limb, little is said about one-hand driving. This is not meant facetiously. The hazard is a real one, says The Insurance Magazine.

Modern cars steer so easily that there is a constant temptation to take one hand off the wheel, to drive with the other, perhaps even with but one or two fingers. Mental relaxation accompanies this practice. Any sudden emergency, a blowout, a child dashing between parked cars, a sudden skid, finds the driver physically unprepared, unable to cope with the situation.

Elementary, isn't it? Yet how many of us are completely free from criticism on this score? Both hands on the wheel, please!

★

This Age

"And what did you learn in Scripture lesson, dear?" asked mother.

"Oh, all about the Ten Commandos," replied Tommy.

★

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