SPORTS &

by A SIXBIT CRITIC

Tennis is a game which gives us, personally, a pain in the neck. This is not such a dirty slam at a really fine sport as it might appear at first sight, but merely our way of saying that for donkey's years our role in tennis has been strictly that of a spectator; and no sport on earth will give you a crick in the neck as quicky and surely as watching first-grade tennis, unless your observation post is directly back of one of the base-lines.

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Not that we Canadians get much chance of taking a swivel at first-grade tennis, the quality of our native game seeming to improve at about the same rate of speed as that of our race-track Thorough--breds—and if you think that is a complimentary remark, you're welcome.

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Our Canadian racket-wielders are pretty much outclassed any time they step into top-notch competition, and that's all there is about it; and while it's customary—and easy—to put the blame almost entirely on our weather conditions, it's possible that there may be other reasons as well. With so many Ontario communities either engaged in, or planning, the construction of sports centres, possibly the following remarks regarding the proper courts to build in order to encourage fast tennis may not be too far off the beam.

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It's no real secret that the best tennis in the world is played in California. A prominent official out there recently stated that they considered it a poor year when their players didn't win at least seventy-five per cent of their matches in the major national and international tournaments. He wasn't just boasting, either. He was simply stating a fact that's borne out by the records. And it can't all be just sun and balmy weather, because other sections of the world are blessed with those commodities as well as California—but they still don't have the mass production of Grade A racketeers.

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Gene Mako, who tennis fans recall as doubles partner of Don Budge,—and a grand combination they were—believes that the nature of the courts they play on has far more to do with California youngsters' success than the climate. Unlike most other places, young Californians are brought up almost exclusively on tennis courts of concrete manufacture.

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In contrast to the surfaces in use throughout the rest of the country, the concrete court gives tennis balls a good, true bounce. One thing this tends to deveop in a player is smoothness and rhythm of stroking.

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The bounce, too, off concrete is faster than grass or cla or practically any other surface outside of hardwood. What does this mean? More speed, for one thing.

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The development of the attacking game that is synonymous with success in tennis, for another. "On concrete you learn to hit and come in," Mako explains. You learn to play correctly. Look over the lists of recent years. See if you ccan find a clay courts player who consistently won any of the big tournaments. You know why they haven't? Clay court players are 90 per cent baseliners. And you just can't win big matches from the baseline."

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Mako, who now is a construction engineer and a specialist at cement courts, recently returned to California from a trip East. "Back there and in the Midwest they know nothing about cement construction," he claims. "They do it all wrong. Whey they do build a cement court they do it by sections.

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"Any one-process pour is superior to a two-process," he explained. "That way you get a flat, even surface that is free from buckling." In constructing a cement court, Mako likes to have his crew begin pouring at 6:30 in the morning of the appointed day. If all goes well, that phase of the job ought to take no more than four hours. That is, for a court of normal size, say 60 by 120 feet.

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"At noon, just as the cement starts to settle, the hand finishers go to work," Mako explained. "This is the most important part of the operation. A hand-applied rotary finish must be put on the court." A delicate process, the work is demanding of an artisan's skill. "Out of 100 hand finishers," Mako said, "maybe you will get three good ones."

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Of course, the cement courts are expensive. Say between $5,000 and $6,000, depending upon the type and location. **After that, though, there is practically no upkeep. The courts don't have to be watered, rolled, sodded or, better than anything, mowed.**

"MR. EX"
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THE FARM FRONT

When I ran across news about the latest substitute for eggs, I couldn't help thinking of Uncle Eph Palmer, back on the farm in Wellington County in the days of too long ago. Aunt Hetty had just returned from the village where it was her custom to trade in butter, eggs and similar truck for store goods and Uncle Eph inquired how much eggs were fetching.

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"Three dozen for a quarter," Aunt Hetty replied, "and likely to go lower they say." "Is that all?" said Uncle Eph. "Heck! That hardly pays for the wear and tear on the poor hens!"

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Anyway, according to the dispatch I referred to at the beginning, over in Norway they've perfected a chemical process which outproduces one hundred thousand hens to daily transform quantities of codfish waste into synthetic egg white. One pound of the artificial product is said to be equivalent to the albumen contained in 150 hen's eggs.

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According to Chemical and Engineering News, the synthetic albumen contains 80 to 90 per cent pure protein and can be used for baking, ice-cream, mayonnaise, and pharmacceutical products, as well as in the textile and paint industry. Albumen is also used industrially for soap, cosmetics, and paper.

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One pound of the synthetic product requires approximately 11 pounds of waste from the Norwegian coddfish industry according to the report. Trial production of more than 600 pounds a day has been started by two Norwegian firms.

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Production is carried out by a completely chemical - mechanical proess from the time the fish enter the pipe line at one end of the plant until the end product emerges in the form of a dry white powder. Norwegian fishermen haul about 1,000,000 tons of fish from the sea each year, of which a large portion is processed into margarine and cattle fodder.

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Well, all I have to add is that if this sort of thing continues, pretty soon things will be better --or worse—than they were back in Uncle Eph's day, and there won't be any "wear and tear" on the hens at all. Maybe there won't even be any hens. Ain't Science wonderful?

* * *

Recently a group of prominent Canadian agriculturists and farm editors took a tour through Vermont and New Hampshire where, for the past few years, an extensive grassland improvement program has been in progress, the folks down there believing that highly productive pastures are an important part of improving and maintaining rural prosperity.

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While there the Canadians saw prosperous dairy farms, for example, with as much as seventy-five per cent of their areas in grass. Many farms were able to maintain a dairy cow on two acres of forage per year. On one farm for a herd of Guernseys (26 milking) enough forage was obtained from 47 acres of hay and pasture. In most cases excess grass was harvested and preserved as grass silage which was fed in dry weather in summer when pastures were relatively unproductive and during winter to keep up milk production.

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The New England farmers use no essentially new ideas or methods to achieve their success. Most of their grasslands are the hay-pasture type which are left in hay and pasture for five years before re-plowing and re-seeding. No seed mixture is standard for the area. One excellent pasture consisted of ladino clover and orchard grass only.

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High yields are obtained by other farmers from mixing such grasses as timothy, brome or orchard grass with legumes such as alfalfa, red or ladino clover, depending on what mixture has been found to be most productive. Good results are obtained when legumes are seeded in the fall and grasses during spring. No farms visited used more than 15 pounds of seed per acre.

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Highy productive pastures were fertilized with as much as 1,000 pounds of fertilizer per acre at the time of seeding. For maintainence during the next five years superphosphate was applied alone or in mixture with potash or a complete mixture depending on the seed used and needs of the soil as determined by a soil test. After the initial treatment, top-dressing with manure or fertilizer is standard practice each year.

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The general consensus of the visiting group was that methods used by New England farmers in their grassland program should be carefuly studied and emulated by Canadians who are looking to livestock as the main source of income. Potential benefits are twofold:

(a) Production of low cost yet highly nutritous feed.

(b) A paying soil conservation program—something that is vitally needed for Canadian farm lands.

* * *

All of which sounds not only interesting, but mighty sensible and practical as well, and I'm glad to pass along these suggestions to any readers of this column—and I hope there are a lot of you—to whom they may be of value.

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