



Can Spring be far behind?

—(Staff Photo)

Bill Smiley



Watching our high school hockey team in action the other day, I could not refrain from brooding about how the game has changed.

If what I was watching was "sport", and "schoolboy" sport at that, I guess it's time I was put out to pasture.

Oh, it was exciting, all right. That is, if you like to watch teenage boys trying to tear each other's arms off with deliberate hooks, remove each other's teeth with high sticks, and smash each other's brains out against the boards.

Throw in some deliberate slashing, tripping, kneeling, buti-ending and a couple of fights, and you have the picture of young Canada playing its national game.

Admittedly, the game is faster and more furious than ever. But furious is a word that does not belong in sport, unless you think professional boxing is a sport, which it is not, in my opinion.

In vain do the coaches of high school teams tell their charges to play hard but clean. The kids have watched too much pro hockey, where most of the fans, like spectators in a Roman arena, want blood, and the pros oblige.

The only thing that redeems the spec-

tacle — and it is a spectacle, not a game — is the fact that there are usually one or two players on each team who still believe in skill rather than violence and who use their heads for something besides butting.

These are the players who emerge as the team leaders, even though some of the "wild men" may have more natural ability. These are the players who almost never get a penalty, who walk away from a stupid fight rather than look for one, who put some spark into the team when it is behind. A pleasure to watch.

And then there are the others. Kids who are pleasant and well-mannered off the ice, but go berserk the minute the first whistle blows.

One of them expressed his philosophy to me: "Yah. Yer sposeta drop yer stick when a fight starts, but yuh don't drop it till the other guy drops his." And, of course, if the other guy is following the same principle, there could be a stick-swinging match.

Put four feet of hardwood in the hands of two young hunkies, let them start swinging their clubs, and you have a situation more deadly than many of the duels of history, fought with lethal weapons.

It's about as quick a way as any to wind

up with a smashed nose, a permanent scar, a concussion, a skull fracture, or one eye.

In my opinion, a great deal of the blame for the situation lies with the referees. They seem to be brain-washed into letting anything go, short of chopping a head off with a stick. The game is faster and more "colorful" that way. And the color is that of blood.

The goalie used to be protected by a sort of mutual consent. He was slower and more vulnerable because of his heavy padding. You took your shot, and if he stopped it, skated around him. Now, he comes out to stop a shot and is quite likely to get a mouthful of high stick. Result? The goalie starts playing dirty, to protect himself.

Maybe I'm just old-fashioned. But when I played team sports — football, hockey, baseball — there were one or two "dirty" players on each team. Caught in the act, they were penalized and ostracised.

Nowadays, you have to look hard to find one or two "clean" players on each team. And it's the "dirty" players who get the roars from the crowd. This is fact, and it's fact that is sobering, saddening and sickening.

be held in the later afternoon, you may obtain permission from the Board, provided you can give proof that your daily plan book is up to date and that the children under your care will not suffer because of your absence.

"Leave of Absence—This will, in future, be granted only in exceptional circumstances and only to teachers who have had more than 35 years outstanding service with this Board. It must be stressed that no reason can be granted for the following two reasons:

"Operations—We wish to discourage any thoughts you may have of having an operation as we believe that as long as you are teaching for this Board you will need all of what ever you have and should not consider having anything removed. We hired you as you are and to have anything removed would be less than we bargained for.

"Pregnancy"—It is the opinion of this Board that no teacher has any business to get pregnant. When you decided to become a teacher it should have been understood that you would devote yourself to other people's children. There is no time to have any of your own.

"Death (your own)—This will still be accepted as a legitimate excuse for absence, provided that your long range plan is completed to the end of the school term. Also, the Board will require at least one month's notice if you are going to die so that a new teacher may be trained to fill your position.

"Washrooms—It has been brought to the attention of this School Board that washroom privileges are being abused by many teachers. It must be clearly understood that washrooms are to be used at recess only. As this is only 15 minutes in all schools, it should be divided by the number of teachers on staff so that all may have a chance. It is suggested that teachers go in alphabetical order to avoid confusion. Teachers who have yard duty must not use the washrooms, but must wait until the next recess or until they get home."

That's the teachers' side of it.

Now if we could only see what they have hung up in the Board rooms.

Those government hand outs . . .

Governments delight in giving back your own money and attracting to themselves all the credit for being so generous. Sometimes the plans are successful and sometimes they get so involved in red tape it takes more people to administer the plan than is reasonable.

We suggest that is the background to the province's tax credits which are to replace the rebate plan on municipal taxes introduced two or three years ago. The rebate system was too complicated and fraught with administrative difficulties.

Now instead of receiving the annual tax rebates, usually \$60 to \$80, property owners and tenants will be able to make deductions, representing part of their municipal taxes, on their 1973 federal income tax forms.

Unlike the blanket rebates, the tax credits will vary according to the taxpayer's income and they'll be built into the federal government's tax-collecting system.

If the calculations are built into the income tax filing form like the provincial tax is at the moment, requiring a separate subtraction and

later addition just to prove how much the province gets and how much is Ottawa's hand, the form is going to be fraught with frustration. We can see someone in Ottawa emphasizing the importance of another separate subtraction and later addition to prove to the taxpayer the benefit accruing from having his residence in Ontario — and of course too, to prove how helpful government is in giving back some of your own money — watered down as it may be from its pass along the bureaucratic line.

—The Canadian Champion

Free Press Editorial Page

Mini-comment . . .

Many people have made complimentary remarks to this office about the efficiency of the town's works department during February and the early part of March, months in which the weatherman compressed the worst part of the winter. Roads were kept plowed under some of the most severe conditions and the business section cleaned of snow overnight so normal conditions could resume after a snowfall. A tip of the editorial hat to the town superintendent and his crew.

The Canadian Champion regrets the necessity of an 11 man police force in Milton, a town of 7,500, feeling the numbers of police are indicative of changing times and mirror frightening aspects of modern living. The guideline at one time was one policeman for every 1,000 people. Not only is it regretful, says the Champion, it is very costly.

We are delighted to see the Robert Little school stage another operetta this year in keeping with the spirit of many pleasing performances in the past from both Acton schools. We hope Acton schools can continue to stage these performances which in our opinion are joyful expressions of school days that linger through a lifetime for the participants.

Interviewed by the London Free Press, ex-Premier John Roberts hit the proverbial environmental nail on the head when he commented that some writers, Toffler for example, seem to know only one environment—the huge city. "I've gone around Ontario enough to realize that is entirely wrong," Mr. Roberts said.

It was an early Spring for almost all Acton's hockey teams this year but players of all ages from novice to

Junior have provided plenty of excitement for fans and supporters. It won't be long until they pull the ice making switch at the community centre and we'll know Spring is really with us. But first the figure skating club has its annual ice skating show.

We see where three of the candidates in the race for Halton's Conservative nomination are taking swipes at the French—on post office signs and other nit-picking issues, in imitation of some of the federal leaders. We hope they broaden their minds a bit before one of them is selected to carry the Halton banner. They might be wise to take a leaf from the book of Bill Davis or some of the other enlightened Conservative provincial leaders, who aim their ammunition at some of the important issues, instead of appealing to prejudices.

Hope the "sizzler" is feminine . . .

What is going to be the hot fashion trend in stores for the ladies this Spring?

Most observers will agree that following on the heels of hot pants, anything designers whomp up for this year will only create a minor stir. However, dress manufacturers apparently have an ace up their collective sleeves in the "sizzler"—a micro-mini-skirt with matching bikini panties—as the item likely to replace last Spring's hot pants.

But, according to the Financial Post, the sizzler hasn't started to sizzle yet. Casual sportswear is the hot item — blazers, shirts, pants and skirts, which women can put together in layers.

In the past two years sportswear has gradually replaced dresses as the volume seller. Canadian department store sales figures for 1971 show sports-

wear sales totalled \$124.1 million. A 17.6 per cent gain from a year earlier, while dress sales reached only \$76.2, an 8.2 per cent rise.

The trend, according to the fiberts, is partly a result of women's search for individuality, partly a matter of economics. Buying a wardrobe of separates lets women combine the pieces in their own way. And by mixing and matching they can get more mileage from a sportswear purchase than if they spent the same amount on dresses.

All of which tempts us to stifle a large h-hum, what's new and what happened to the five cent cigar.

We wish women would dress so they look feminine.

At the risk of being labelled a male chauvinist pig, we agree the sooner most women dress in clothes that suit them individually the better it will be

for all of them. And the more feminine the better.

Sure, sports clothes are fine—for the golf course, a hike, belting a tennis ball or hooking a sportsman, but in this writer's estimation they stop short there. When the sporting activities are finished it is time to doff the sporty duds and get into something graceful.

We like the long gowns the ladies are starting to find makes them look graceful at a dance or at home. You can tell the sexes apart easily. Most men would look terrible in one as well as in hot pants or sizzlers.

Women's legs are better, their natural outlines more scenic than a man's, so it stands to reason they should shy away from male accented clothes and remind men they are feminine.

And what is the matter with that?

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, March 20, 1952.

Sgt. Jack Angell has returned from Korea where he has been serving with the American army. He is visiting his parents Mr. and Mrs. George Angell. He thinks things in Korea are pretty much at a stalemate.

Acton's mill rate for 1952 taxes is 64 mills to raise \$151,275.72 for the town's operation. This is approximately a 50 per cent increase over last year's mill rate of 43. Several items were cut in an austerity move.

Rev. Ralph Price has been appointed rector of St. Alban's church. He is the assistant curate of St. George's church in Guelph.

Esquering council this month paid claims for 54 foxes.

George Ware and Ed McHugh report the first robin.

Greenock and Cedarvale public school students toured plasticons, the Acton Free Press and Beardmore and Co. plants Wednesday with their teachers Miss Joanne Julian and Mr. Ralph McKeown.

Saturday evening the young people of the Presbyterian church at Rockwood were having a crokinole social in the church basement when suddenly fire broke out in the kitchen. The fire was quickly extinguished.

Fathers were in charge of the program and the speaker's topic was The Model Father at the regular meeting of the Acton Home and School Association. The speaker was Stanley Hodgins of Victoria School Kitchener. H. Baxter led in a song with Ted Hansen at the piano. Some of the fathers put on a skit on a day in a classroom.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, March 16, 1922.

Considerable data has been gathered by the town clerk relative to the government's scheme for providing for unemployment but no action was taken by council.

The pretty willow catkins are blooming again.

Since the big ice storm two weeks ago there have been no lights in St. Mary's and there won't be for some time yet.

A very successful and enjoyable dance was held last Friday evening March 17 in the town hall under the auspices of the Junior Daughters of the Empire. A dainty lunch was served and the hall was prettily decorated with St. Patrick's decorations. Mason's orchestra in their usual capable manner supplied the music.

The merchants in town have decided to extend their Wednesday half holiday this year by a couple of months.

Postmaster and Mrs. James Matthews celebrate their 64th wedding anniversary tomorrow. They were married in Acton and have lived here very happily all those years.

An editor threatened to publish the name of a certain young man who was seen hugging and kissing a girl in the park unless his subscription to the paper was paid up.

Fifty-nine young men called and paid up the next day, while two of them paid for another year in advance.

The sanitary inspector wishes all citizens to clean up the winter's accumulations about their premises.

Although confined to the house for the past month Police Magistrate Moore has held several court sessions there and wrongdoers have been obliged to pay penalties commensurate with their offenses.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, March 25, 1897.

Inexpressibly sad and painful is the loss when the mother of a new-born babe gives her life as a tribute to the advent of the little one. Such are the circumstances surrounding the death of Mrs. Donald Mann which occurred at the home of her husband last Friday. The husband keenly feels the loss and the little babe will ever miss a mother's care and training. Mrs. Mann was in her 34th year.

Carter Harvey met with a serious loss in the death of his dray horse "Sandy". He was taken with inflammation Sunday night and when the owner visited the stable the next morning he was in intense agony. The animal was especially adapted to the work of the dray and was a favorite on the streets with everybody. He was a well-bred animal, weighed 1,760 pounds and stood 17 hands and one inch in height. He was raised by Mr. Alex Sprowl of the second line and Mr. Harvey has owned him for a number of years. He was valued at \$185 but the owner would not have parted with him for that money.

Some of the stone street crossings are hard to find. The chairman of Streets and Walks should see that they are raised.

Contractor D. D. Mann has returned from Lethbridge and McLeod where he went on business connected with the Crows Nest Pass Railway.

There has been a lively trade in sap pails and spiles this past week.

Butter and eggs are selling this week at 12 to 14 cents.

Mr. Robert Pasmore, postmaster at Rockwood, died at the age of 90 years. He had lived there for half a century.

by Hartley Coles

COLES' SLAW

Just mention the word teacher and you've got an argument on your hands.

School teachers, once the forgotten people of society who were expected to subsist on meagre wages, uphold the status quo with the life of a Spartan and look down at all foolishness and frivolity with the long nose of a puritan, are now organized and thumping their noses at those who take periodic swipes at them.

It's a refreshing attitude after some of the brow-beating the teachers used to accept meekly from the public.

They are not even stoert of the school boards nowadays as is evidenced by statements attributed to Tom Ramautarsingh, president of the county Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. Tom must have been a plain speaker most of his life. He told the school trustees that if they were really dedicated to maintaining their budget in the face of rising costs and the cost of living, then they should begin cutting at home and offer their services free of charge.

At one time a statement like that from a teacher would have been enough to have him or her black-balled from every school in the province.

Now all the school trustees will likely do is yawn and resume negotiations on the teachers' next wage hike, because they know Tom was only giving them some of their own back. And whether you agree with it or not, you have to admire the man for having the intestinal fortitude (I dislike the word "guts") to hurl down the gauntlet.

I think the main ingredient for both sides in any negotiation is to preserve your sense of humor. The board should just give a good belly laugh when the teachers ask for a whopping big raise or only want five kids at a time in the classroom.

In their turn the teachers should laugh uproariously when the board says it intends to restrict raises to one per cent for the current year and even considered cutting pay.

Then let them go at each other with hammer and logs in the best traditions of employer-employee relationships.

Some of the humor of the annual—or is it semi-annual contractual proceedings—seems to have rubbed off on the teachers if you can appreciate the following epistle from a fictitious Board which hung conspicuously on a teachers' room bulletin board:

"Due to the frequent absenteeism of many employees of this School Board it has become necessary to revise certain policies. The following changes should be considered to be in effect as from today:

"Sickness—This is no longer an excuse. The Board will not accept your doctor's statement as proof, as we believe that if you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to school.

"Funerals—This cannot be accepted as an excuse. There is nothing you can do for the deceased and it should be possible to find somebody in a lesser position to attend to the arrangements. However, if the funeral can

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