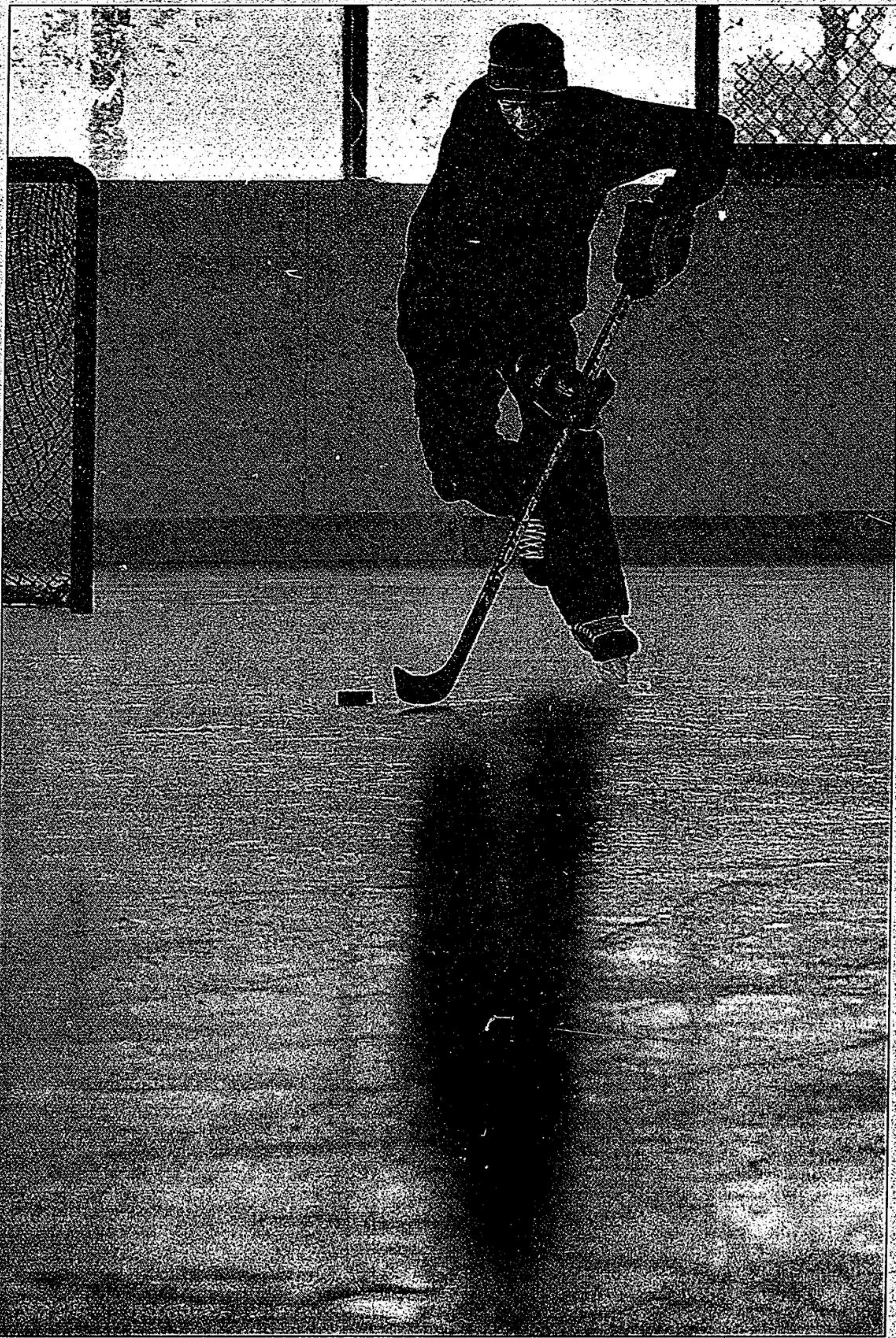


SPORTS



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

It's just me and my shadow

Chris Sykes was the only person to take to the Buttermakers rink at Boyd's Source for Sports Tuesday morning as he worked on his skating and puckhandling skills.

Burrows has concerns with junior hockey proposals

Spirit GM agrees midget hockey needs to be bolstered

Ken Burrows has no problem with the intent of a proposal to make junior hockey teams in this country younger

and more Canadian. But he has a question. The Stouffville Spirit junior A club general manager says the Hockey Canada plan should strengthen midget hockey and avoid "nightmarish situations" for some out-of-town players.

The organization proposed

at its recent semi-annual meeting that 14- and 15-year-old players be forbidden from playing junior hockey and that all junior teams, including major junior clubs, be limited to only one 16-year-old on their rosters.

See PROPOSAL, page 13.

Topping's career as hockey official one he won't forget

Ballantrae resident had brief stint in NHL as linesman

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

A striped jersey hangs in the closet of Ted and Peg Topping's Ballantrae residence, forever a reminder of the days when Ted roamed the ice lanes in the National Hockey League and the Ontario Hockey Association.

If the sweater could talk, it could tell a thousand stories.

For 10 years, Ted Topping, now 81 and retired, officiated in the NHL and the OHA, whistling down plays involving some of the most prolific players in the 50s era of the sport.

Names like Syl Apps, Gordie Drillon, Bob Davidson, Carl Brewer and Bobby Baun are as familiar to Topping today as they were to fans 50 years ago.

While Topping's stint in "the big" lasted only three games, they left indelible marks, both physically and mentally, marks he'll never forget.

Like a night at Maple Leaf Gardens when Toronto was playing Chicago.

"The Leafs were shorthanded," recalls the former clothing industry entrepreneur. "Tim Horton retrieved a loose puck in the Toronto end and, in an attempt to ice it, rifled a shot off the side boards. I could see it coming," remembers Ted, "I did my best to avoid it, to no avail."

The puck, the speed of which Topping estimates at more than 100 miles an hour, hit him in the buttocks, squarely on his wallet.

Despite the auxiliary piece of padding, Topping recalls collapsing to the ice, tears of pain streaming down his face.

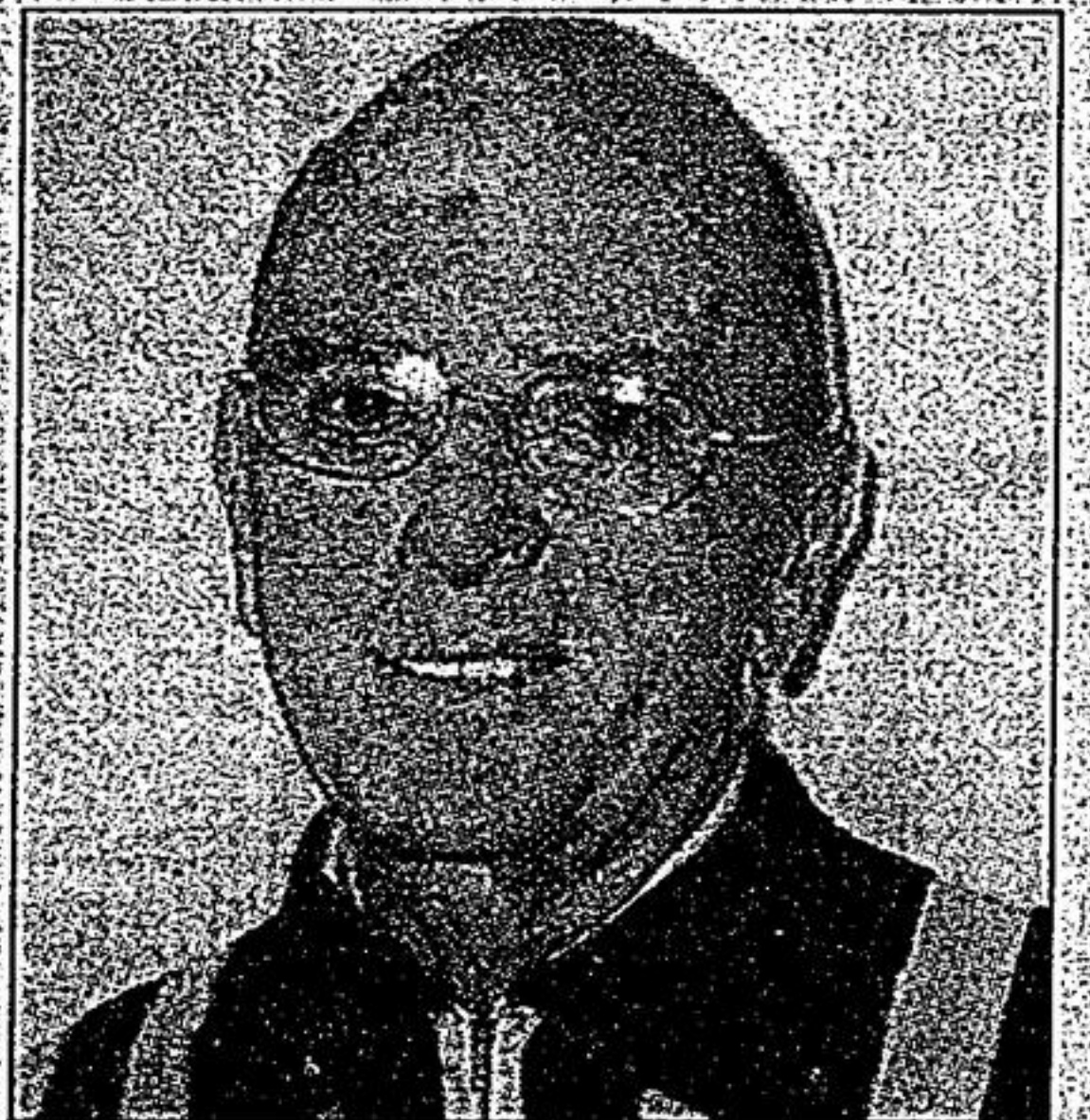
"I thought for sure my back was broken," he says. Nevertheless, he gathered himself together and continued.

The next day, however, he had a black and blue welt the size of a pumpkin emblazoned on his backside.

Topping also vividly recalls working his first NHL game at the Gardens.

EXPERIENCED BUTTERFLIES

"Referee Red Storey, linesman Jim Primeau and I were set to skate onto the ice. Suddenly, I looked up and saw 14,000 wildly screaming fans looking down. I said to Red, 'I'm not going out there, this is crazy.' He (Storey) grabbed me by the shoulder and literally shoved me through the door. I spent the next few min-



TED TOPPING: Has vivid memories of working his first National Hockey League game at Maple Leaf Gardens.

utes checking the nets. This helped settle my nerves."

Because Topping was an exceptionally strong skater, he had no trouble keeping up with the play. The fact each linesman had only his own section of ice to patrol, helped also.

At age 32, Topping was forced to make a decision. He'd been asked by Carl Voss, the NHL's referee-in-chief, to go Boston and do afternoon games there.

At the time, however, he was climbing the business ladder with A. Bradshaw and Son, a major clothing company in Toronto.

He chose to stay with Bradshaw and eventually rose in rank to the position of president, overseeing a multitude of stores across Canada.

But that didn't end his hockey officiating career. He returned to the OHA where he remained several more seasons.

Ted Topping grew up in a hockey family. His father, Ted Sr., and his uncle, Percy Topping, were involved with the Toronto Hockey League, Ted Sr. with the Wychwood Rats, junior champions in 1920, 1921 and 1922, and Percy, a long-time scheduler of games.

Ted Jr. attended Vaughan Road Collegiate where he played football and hockey. He would graduate to the senior division of the THL.

RECEIVED GOOD ADVICE

It was his uncle Percy who suggested "if you want to stay in the game (hockey), you should try officiating."

He did, and he's never been sorry.

Following service with an RCAF Lancaster bomber crew, Topping and wife Peg moved to Stouffville, where he was immediately contacted by Bill Hanley and assigned

See BUSINESS, page 13.