

I. THE HEARINGS

The tone and nature of the various public hearings depended largely upon the levels of play represented by the presentors of briefs and the discussants. In Lethbridge and Grande Prairie, where the interests of minor hockey (up to the juvenile level) were predominant, the discussions were completely amiable and focused upon two major points: (1) whether or not our recommendations, if adopted, would upset zoning regulations and other techniques for achieving balanced play at the minor level; and (2) whether or not our recommendations, if adopted, would prove adequate to correct such perceived wrongs as the Protected Player Agreement, one-sided contracts, and so on at the Junior and Junior A levels.

In Calgary and Edmonton, where the interests of Junior and Junior A hockey and those of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association were predominant, the discussions were less amiable. Indeed, most of the groups represented (except parents) expressed a desire to maintain the status quo; to "keep the government out of hockey"; and to leave the sport under the control of the Association and the "promoters". These expressions did not go unchallenged, however. Indeed, it appeared to us that the seminars divided rather neatly -- with the promotor group, the "establishment", arguing for maintenance of the status quo and the consumers arguing for change.

II. THE BRIEFS

Before, during, and since the hearings, we have received and analyzed thirteen briefs from the following individuals and groups:

1. The Sylvan Lake and District Recreation Board
2. The Area Council of the West Edmonton Social Task Force
3. Public Relations and Communication Associates
4. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Dykstra
5. The Stettler Recreation Commission
6. The Minor Hockey Association of Calgary
7. The Edmonton Metropolitan Hockey Association
8. Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
9. Recreation Advisory Board, County of Strathcona
10. Calgary Branch of (CAHPER) the Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
11. Edmonton Parks and Recreation
12. The Alberta Junior A Hockey League
13. The Canadian Amateur Hockey Association

The briefs are ordered, in the above listing, in terms of the tone and nature of their reactions to the report -- the first being in total agreement with the report and supportive of the recommendations, the last being in almost complete disagreement and embittered by the recommendations.

More specifically, the briefs line up on the continuum of agreement and disagreement, as follows:

- i. The first four briefs listed above were in complete agreement with the recommendations -- but in some cases would have gone further in "liberalizing sport" or "restoring the fun" to hockey.
- ii. Numbers 5,6,7,8 and 9, though allegedly in opposition to certain recommendations (notably 2,5, and 4) were found, upon careful examination and further discussion, to be more in agreement than at first appeared. Specifically, when it was found that these recommendations, if implemented, would in no way outlaw the zoning and registration procedures now in effect, the presentors of the briefs tended to withdraw their objections.

- iii. Brief #10 was critical of the methodology of the research and, like numbers 5 to 9, tended to misinterpret some of the recommendations. When these misinterpretations were cleared up, it was discovered that no argument remained with respect to the recommendations -- except that the presentors of the brief would have gone beyond to cover other problem areas in hockey.
- iv. Brief #11, presented by Edmonton Parks and Recreation, was a mixture of agreements and disagreements with the report. It acknowledges that many of the injustices dealt with in the report are real. But it rejects government intervention as a solution.
- v. Brief #12, presented by the Alberta Junior A Hockey League, was, in essence, a defense of the Player's Contract -- and, hence, a rejection of any suggestion that the League's powers over players be diminished.
- vi. Brief #13 was a scathing criticism of the report and a complete rejection of its recommendations. Though the C.A.H.A. defended itself and rejected the report with considerable vigour, it presented no new evidence to counter the conclusions drawn from the documentary evidence presented in the original report.

From these briefs and from the discussions at the public hearings, we have drawn several conclusions:

First, many persons and groups, associated with hockey in this province, became annoyed when they were not consulted or involved in the inquiry in its early stages. But this study was never intended to be a study of hockey by hockey men. So we had to ignore such annoyances until the reaction stage.

Second, many persons were disappointed that the inquiry did not delve into several alleged problems in hockey. But this was to be a study of individual rights in hockey -- not hockey per se. So we had to ignore such expressions of disappointment also.

Third, it became apparent to us that, but for a few notable exceptions, respondents to the report reacted in terms of the vested interests of some group or association -- not in terms of the rights of the individual player. Given our orientation and our task, we tended to be wary of these reactions.