

NHL pension scandal scores complicated hit

The Defence Never Rests
By Bruce Dowbiggin
HarperCollins, 322 pages

Reviewed by Nick Martin
A Free Press reporter

ACTUARIES IN jock straps" doesn't sound like the most thrilling premise.

As much as the outrageous multimillion dollar-scandal as the National Hockey League's players' pension fund has proved to be, can we really handle 322 pages of intricate financial detail?

Ten pages, maybe, 20 pages tops.

Bruce Dowbiggin, currently the sports anchor on CBC Newsworld's The National, has had the good sense to wrap a story you need around the very personal and fascinating histories of familiar and benighted players the system exploited.

Stars such as Red Kelly, Ted Lindsay, Frank Mahovlich, Andy Bathgate and Bill Gadsby retired after 15 or 20 seasons in the NHL, only to find the pensions into which they'd poured huge chunks of their pay gave them below-poverty-line payments.

When the NHL repeatedly stonewalled their polite and deferential inquiries, the retired players finally went radical. They organized, launched and, against greater odds than they'd ever faced on the ice, eventually won a landmark legal action.

The NHL, Dowbiggin tells us, arrogantly and secretly mismanaged the players' pension fund, skimming off its surpluses, poorly investing the players' shares. Those epic international Canada Cup series and Canada-Soviet showdowns touted to boost the pension plan actually did nothing for the players — the league used the money to cover its own contributions.

Dowbiggin tells his story through the eyes



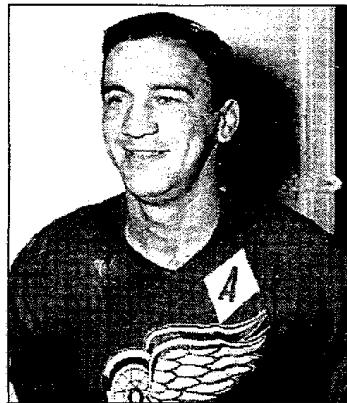
Brewer (left), Bathgate, Lindsay (below) found pensions exploited.

four Toronto Maple Leaf defencemen — Carl Brewer, Bobby Baun, Allan Stanley and the late Tim Horton.

These are players we never really knew through the sycophantic sportswriters and broadcasters of the day, and it's fascinatingly iconoclastic stuff.

The Defence Never Rests is descriptively padded at times in Dowbiggin's efforts to depict an era many of his readers may not have lived through — he's obviously a man who loves the players on the Maple Leafs while hating Toronto.

Unless you're an unrepentant capitalist who prefers to cheer for Conn Smythe or Jim Norris, get out your old Parkhurst hockey cards to sift through as you enjoy Dowbiggin's work — but have your accountant on standby to interpret.



Book blasts food, drug groups

Counter-Attack!: The Joy of Stress
By Peter G. Hanson, MD
Stoddart, 236 pages

Reviewed by Michael Finlayson
A Winnipeg lawyer

PETER HANSON'S new book, *Action Plan for Gaining Control of Your Life and Health*, is currently on prominent display in many bookstores. If you see someone placing best-seller stickers on its cover, compare that person's face with the picture on the cover of the book and do not be surprised if it is the author's. Apparently he used this trick to assist his earlier book, *The Joy of Stress*, in becoming a best-seller.

This book calls to mind Karl Popper's words about the conspiracy theory of society: that such calamities as war, unemployment and poverty are the results of direct design by some powerful individuals or groups.

Hanson writes that: "We are fed lies and half-truths by special-interest food lobbies and are duped by drug companies that want us to reach for their products every time we are feeling out of sorts. Big government has not protected us, in fact, has squandered our children's future standard of living in order to buy our votes."

He claims he will, "reveal the hidden dangers that lurk in ambush in the fine print on food labels, or in supposedly healthy foods that come with no labels at all."

His prescriptions are legion. It is as if in the past five years he collected and collated every news article connected to matters of health.

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Fast Facts

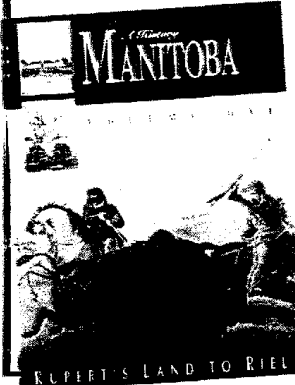
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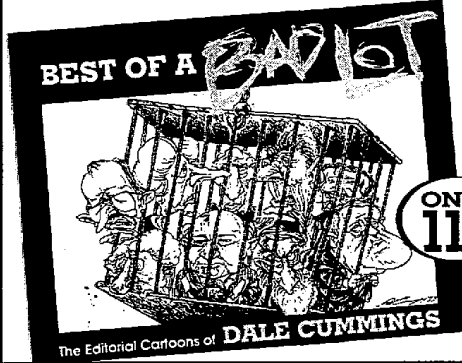
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