

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Skate Canada

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

Presentation to The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Presented by Skate Canada August 2012 Summary

In 2014, Skate Canada will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the first official Canadian Figure Skating Championships, one of only a few heritage sports properties in Canada to celebrate this important milestone. Skate Canada is seeking a one-time financial contribution from the Federal Government to finance the celebrations all across Canada.

Introduction

In 1914, the Figure Skating Department of the Amateur Skating Association of Canada was created. In that same year, the first official Canadian Figure Skating Championships were held in Ottawa in partnership with the Minto Skating Club. This marked a special moment in the history of Canadian figure skating. Today, Skate Canada is the largest figure skating governing body in the world with over 182,000 registered members in more than 1250 member clubs and 60 skating schools. Skate Canada is a world leader in building champions and is committed to the development of personal excellence for all ages through life-long participation in skating for fun fitness and achievement. Whether it's hockey, speed or figure skating, Skate Canada teaches all Canadians to skate.

History of Skating in Canada

At the very beginning of the sport, blades made of bone gave way to engineering with the invention of iron. In 1837 the first iron figure skating blade was developed in England, a breakthrough that allowed skaters to move backward and forward with ease and control. In 1854, John Forbes of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia perfected the iron figure skating blade by attaching the blade to the boot and eliminating the need for leather straps and heavy screws. With improved facilities and skates, skating became popular as a hobby and as a result skating clubs popped up across the country. By the mid-1800s, Canadians realized the benefit of joining a skating club where the ice was maintained and smooth. The first skating club in Canada opened in 1833 in Lily Lake, St-John, New Brunswick. In 1850 the Montreal Skating Club flooded the street at the corner of Alexander and Craigh Streets and charged skaters a fee of 10 shillings to skate...it was a huge success! In the 1860s, skating rinks named after Queen Victoria opened in Toronto, Quebec City, Hamilton, St John's, Sarnia and Brantford. In 1858, the City of Quebec built a shed around their main skating rink to become the first covered rink in the world. With gas lights installed, skating then developed beyond a day-time activity to an evening's form of entertainment. In 1863, the first covered skating rink opened in the Maritimes at the Horticultural Gardens in Halifax. The largest and the most extravagant rink was the Victoria Rink in Montreal built by the Victoria Skating Club in 1862. At the start of the twentieth century, the Victoria Skating Club was considered one of the finest rinks in the world and in addition to offering a large ice surface, featured a gallery that could accommodate 700 spectators. In February 1888, the Club hosted a speed and "fancy" skating championship which was attended by an audience made up of Canadians and Americans. At the same time, club skating carnivals became very popular with the first known carnival in Canada held in Quebec City. Titled the "Ball on Ice", it attracted 1000 participants. In 1865, the Royal Rink Masquerade Carnival in Toronto claimed to have 1500 participants. The skating business was booming.

Louis Rubenstein

The most influential Canadian figure skater in the late 1800s was Louis Rubenstein. Louis and his brothers and sisters skated at the Victoria Skating Club in Montréal. In 1864 while visiting in Toronto, Louis Rubenstein had a chance to see American Jackson Haines, the founder of modern skating, and was

inspired by the new style where movements were free and not structured and repetitive, in contrast to the Victorian approach. In 1878, Louis Rubenstein won the “fancy” skating championship in Montreal and then issued a challenge to all Ontario skaters to compete for a Canadian title... but no one accepted the challenge. Things changed dramatically six years later in 1884 when Louis defeated the reigning Canadian champion Alf Cooper in Montreal and subsequently went on to defend the Canadian title from 1886 to 1890. In 1885 and 1889, Louis also won the Championship of America (United States amateur title) In 1887, Louis and other members of the Montreal Skating Club organized a meeting in Montreal to form a national governing body, the Amateur Skating Association of Canada, to establish the rules and govern competitions for both speed skating and figure skating (referred to as “fancy” skating). This became the first governing body of skating in Canada. In 1890, Louis Rubenstein became the first Canadian to represent Canada outside North America in St. Petersburg, Russia at what would eventually become known as the World Championships. The officials were so impressed with his performances that they cast a special medal for him. His experience in Russia and the chaos resulting from a lack of organizational infrastructure and rules confirmed his belief that a governing body was required to establish rules for organizing and managing events and competitions and to ensure consistency. Louis’ passion for skating and the benefits he believed the sport offered motivated him to look for new ways to promote figure skating events and encourage participation from skaters of all ages. In 1894 with the development of junior competitive events, one of his many legacies became a reality.

Governor Generals of Canada and Figure Skating

In the late 1800s, Canadian Governor Generals played a pivotal role in the development of skating. In the mid-1870s, the Governor General, The Earl of Dufferin, offered his grounds at Rideau Hall to the local “fancy” skaters. During the tenure of Governor General, The Earl of Minto, royal interest in figure skating was heightened. His wife, Lady Minto, took up skating when she arrived in Canada in 1899 and hosted skating parties in the gardens of Rideau Hall. Although Lady Minto suffered a skating injury which affected her ability to skate, she never lost her passion for skating and continued her support of the sport. In 1905, Governor General Minto became the patron of the Minto Club and donated a cup, the Minto Challenge Cup, for competition in figure skating. In 1908, the Earl Grey Skating Club was founded in Montreal. In a ceremony at the Victoria Rink, the club honorary president and Lady Evelyn Grey, the daughter of the Governor General, presided at the opening of the Club. In 1910 and 1911, representing the Minto Club, Lady Grey won the Canadian Figure Skating Championship in the Pair event with Ormond Haycock and in Dance with Dudley Oliver. She also won the Singles event in 1911 and repeated her Pair title. In 1912, the Governor General, The Duke of Connaught, also became a patron of the Minto Skating Club and donated the Connaught Cup for competition in figure skating.

1914 Figure Skating Organization is Established

In 1914, an official organization for figure skating was established; the Figure Skating Department of the Amateur Skating Association of Canada. That same year, the first official annual Canadian Figure Skating Championships were held at the Minto Skating Club at the Ottawa Arena. The eight figure skating clubs competing were the Minto Club, Rideau Club of Ottawa, the Toronto Skating Club, the Winter Club of Montreal, the Afternoon Skating Club of Winnipeg, the Connaught Skating Club of Vancouver, the London Skating Club and the Halifax Skating Club. Louis Rubenstein became the first President of the Figure Skating Department, a position he held until his death in 1930. In 1939, the Figure Skating Department became the Canadian Figure Skating Association (CFSa) and in 1946, the CFSa joined the International Skating Union (ISU) and dissolved its association with the Amateur Skating Association of Canada. In 2000, the CFSa changed its name to Skate Canada.

Skate Canada Today

Today, Skate Canada has grown to 1250 member clubs with over 182,000 members from St. John’s, Newfoundland to Tofino, British Columbia. As the largest figure skating governing body in the world, Skate Canada provides standards and rules for figure skating activities to members, appoints judges, referees and other officials, conducts certification and training seminars for skaters and coaches, provides financial support to national team athletes and disseminates information concerning figure skating to the public. Skate Canada is divided into 13

sections, roughly equivalent to the Canadian provinces, with the exception of Ontario which is broken into four sections. The Skate Canada Board of Directors is made up of 14 elected and appointed volunteers from across Canada. Each year an annual convention and general meeting are held where each Skate Canada Member Club is entitled to send an official delegate to discuss and vote on proposed amendments to rules. Members of the Board, the Sections and Committees receive no remuneration for their contribution to Skate Canada. Similarly, the judges, referees and other officials are all volunteers.

In March of 2013 in London, Ontario, Skate Canada will host the "Olympic Games of Figure Skating", the International Skating Union (ISU) World Figure Skating Championships where approximately 200 athletes representing more than 55 member countries will compete in four disciplines, men, ladies, pair and dance. Canadian athletes currently hold two of those titles: Patrick Chan will be hunting for this third consecutive world title while Olympic Dance Champions and local heroes, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir, will also be looking to make it number three. An estimated worldwide TV audience of 160 million viewers will be focused on London, Ontario to watch 900 hours of coverage in 60 countries.

It is predicted the London area will benefit from an economic impact of more than 25 million dollars.

International Competitions - Olympics and World Figure Skating Championships. Although figure skating had been included in the Olympic Games since 1908, Canadians did not participate until 1924 when the first Winter Olympic Games were held in Chamonix. In 1932, Montgomery Wilson won the first medal for Canada (bronze) at the Olympics in Lake Placid. After World War 2, Barbara Ann Scott of Ottawa established Canada as an important nation in the world of figure skating. In 1947 she became the world champion and in 1948 won Canada's first Olympic Gold Medal in figure skating. Since the inclusion of figure skating at the Olympic Games, Canadians have won a total of 22 Olympic medals and at the World Championships a staggering total of 94 medals. Since the inception of the Junior World Championships in 1976, junior Canadian athletes have captured 29 medals in all disciplines. This level of outstanding achievement is unprecedented in the history of national sport organizations in our country, a reflection of our dedication and passion to figure skating in Canada. Recommendation Skate Canada is requesting a one-time financial contribution from the Canadian Government for the 100th Anniversary of the first Canadian Figure Skating Championships in 2014. Skate Canada will be organizing activities from coast to coast involving all Canadians in the celebration of this historic milestone. Skate Canada requests a contribution of \$10 million from the 2013 Federal Budget.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?