

Anti-smoking movement advances

Canada bans smoking at Olympics, plans laws

By Paul R. McGinn
AMN STAFF

Its official title may have been the XV Olympic Winter Games, but to a group of Canadian physicians, last month's spectacular in Calgary, Alberta, was the first Fresh Air Olympics.

The "no smoking" signs that dotted every indoor and outdoor venue may never replace the five interlocking rings that symbolize the Olympics. But to Calgary pediatrician John Read, MD, head of the fresh air campaign, smoke should issue from one source only: the Olympic flame. Fittingly, albeit coincidentally, Dr. Read's son — Canadian Olympic team skier Ken Read — helped carry the Olympic torch into the Feb. 13 opening ceremonies.

"One can read a lot of things into the Olympic charter," said Dr. Read as he entered the Olympic Oval, where crews were preparing for that evening's events. As he looked out onto the ice that hours later would produce a world-record-setting time in the 1,500-meter men's speed skating race, he continued, "One of the things you can read into the charter is that

petition don't mix."

It was with such an idea that Dr. Read, one of the medical advisers to the Canadian National Alpine Ski team, first met with members of the Calgary Olympic Committee — usually known by its bilingual designation of Olympiques Calgary Olympics (OCO) — and the Calgary Olympics Development Assn. After a two-year process culminating last spring, the OCO officially sanctioned the Fresh Air Olympics — Dr. Read's plan to shield athletes from the effects of secondhand smoke, to provide smoke-free work areas for thousands of volunteers, and as Dr. Read put it, "to preserve the dignity and healthful image of the Games."

Subsequently, the physician, a professor in the Dept. of Community Health Sciences at the U. of Calgary Medical School, copped a \$60,000 grant from the Canadian government to study the effects of no-smoking signs upon a large-scale event. Dr. Read spent the U.S. equivalent of \$25,000 for the design and production of the no-smoking signs, with most of the remainder going for sal-



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John Read, MD

The crowning achievement of the Fresh Air Olympics was the prohibition of smoking under every

on courses free of tobacco smoke:

Admittedly, not everyone obeyed the no-smoking signs at start huts and in volunteer-worker tents. A few spectators, volunteer workers, officials, and even coaches and athletes violated the designations. In the Calgary Saddledome — home to hockey and figure skating — the signs inside the arena that forbade smokers from lighting up during the matches and competitions could not keep spectators from walking a few steps into the Saddledome's concourses — where smoking, permitted by the owner of the facility, regularly

any smoker protests against the no-smoking policies. But the Canadian capital of Ottawa presents a much different face to any anti-smoking lobby. There, the country's \$5-billion tobacco industry is fighting to keep an estimated 55 billion cigarets per year in the mouths of some 6.5 million Canadian smokers. In 1986, the last year for which figures are available, tobacco companies netted an estimated U.S. equivalent of \$700 million.

As in the United States, Canadian federal law prohibits advertising of cigarets on radio and television. In addi-

cept tobacco advertising.

DESPITE SUCH restrictions, however, tobacco companies each year spend the U.S. equivalent of \$65 million on advertising promotions and sponsorships for cigarets in Canada — thus the motivation behind the government-sponsored bill awaiting action in Canada's House of Commons.

Bill C-51 would enable the government to ban all advertising and promotion of cigarets, whether in magazines, on billboards, or even on signs that bear the name of a local grocery store.

ings and on virtually all forms of public conveyance. Because it was introduced by a member of the House of Commons and not by the government, Bill C-204 is expected to come to a vote no earlier than a month after Bill C-51.

In Jan. 20 testimony before a House of Commons committee considering Bill C-51, P.J. Fennell, president of the Canadian cigaret manufacturer Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc., said the proposed legislation amounted to "censorship" and "a vehicle for harassment by the anti-tobacco lobby."

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