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# Sport Among “Foreigners”: One Aspect of the Sports Explosion in Winnipeg, 1900-1914

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Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of World War One, an explosion of sporting activity occurred in Winnipeg. Among the several causes of the dramatic increase in the amount of participation were population growth, a decrease in the

number of hours per week that many men were required to work, and an increase in the availability of standardized sports equipment. Every bit as important to the growth of sport as these developments, however, was the fact that leading Winnipeggers energetically promoted greater participation in games because they believed this would alleviate the modern urban problems, such as deteriorating physical health and increasing juvenile delinquency, that seemed to be permeating their city.

Several important occurrences marked, and in part caused, the explosion. Among these were an immense growth in women's sport, a tendency for children's games to be more organized and supervised than had previously been the case, the use of public funds to provide facilities, and participation in a greater variety of sport by members of the "working" classes. Another important development was the real beginning of involvement in sport by the people that were often referred to as "foreigners," the rapidly growing number of Jews, Slavs, and Germans who were associated with many of the urban problems that concerned Winnipeggers, and who, it was hoped, could be assimilated to British-Canadian ways through games.