

Maple Leafs' publicity man Obodiac dies

TORONTO (CP) — Stan Obodiac, a man of many interests but whose main one for years has been Toronto Maple Leafs of the National Hockey League, died today after a long battle with cancer.



Obodiac

Obodiac, 62, a native of Yorkton, Sask., and a member of the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, had been public relations director of the NHL team and of Maple Leaf Gardens for 25 years.

Although he would talk hockey at any time, especially if it concerned the Leafs, Obodiac had many other topics of conversation. He wrote 12 books, spoke six languages, unsuccessful-

ly ran twice for Parliament as a Social Credit party candidate, met Sir Winston Churchill, served as a pilot during the Second World War and had taken courses at universities from Saskatchewan to Glasgow and Belgium.

One of his most satisfying recent accomplishments was his organization called Hockey Players Against Cancer, a project to raise funds for the fight against the disease.

Obodiac's athletic record alone qualified him for the job at Maple Leaf Gardens. He played for the world champion Lethbridge, Alta. hockey team in the 1950-51 season and scored 12 goals in the championship series in Paris.

He coached the Swiss hockey team in 1952-53. He was outstanding at golf, baseball, softball and track and field.

His contacts around the world amazed friends who knew only of his athletic ability. For example years ago, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, former British prime minister, was visiting Saskatchewan and speaking to the legislature when he met the member from Yorkton.

"Oh, you must know Stan Obodiac," said Douglas-Home.

The books he wrote ranged from the most recent one on Pope John Paul to biographies of former hockey great Red Kelly and British business giant Lord Courtauld-Thomson at whose place he had stayed during the war with other air force officers.

Always proud of his Polish ancestry, he was ecstatic when John Paul became Pope.

"It puts a little pride into all of us and proved we can get somewhere," he said at the time.