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URGENT

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

SPORTS

Swedes Contemplate To Stop Ice Hockey
Competition.

SOURCE STOCKHOLM: "Svenska Dagbladet", highly reliable

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 27 November 1952.

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Generally strained relations between Sweden and Czechoslovakia threaten to jeopardize the planned ice-hockey contests in STOCKHOLM in December and in PRAGUE in January all the more so since the Czechs refused an entry-visa to one of Sweden's most outstanding sportwriters, STRANDBERG Lennart.

STRANDBERG intended to go to Czechoslovakia in order to visit ZATOPEK Emil and discuss with him the possibilities of a Swedish visit. After seven weeks, the Czech authorities have now refused STRANDBERG entry as a "undesirable." The conservative STOCKHOLM paper "Svenska Dagbladet" now asks whether Sweden is to agree to having her non-Communist journalists termed as "undesirables." "Should we agree to playing ice-hockey in PRAGUE when no Swedish newspapermen will be permitted to report on the matches," the paper demands.

"The Czech heavens has closed its doors, the " great ZATOPEK" is "tired" and he wont "receive" Swedish colleagues and newspapermen, and Czechoslovakia does not care about tourists, not "such" tourists, writes STRANDBERG, who himself was one of Sweden's most outstanding runners.

"The Czech Government has let fall a most important paper into the hands of a Swedish newspaperman" he goes on. "A paper speaking about the serf, about the tool which is handled by the authorities, which has no liberty of movement and which is not even given permission to receive a sports-leader from a free country.

"Poor Emil. Fortunate Swedish sportemen who can travel anywhere in the free world whenever they want to, who are not too "tired" to welcome foreign journalists and colleagues.

"Poor, poor Emil."

(Over)

EVAL.COMMENT: Whole subject is in line with the aversion of Czechoslovak sport-leaders to send sport teams to non-Iron-Curtain countries.