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Drawing on extensive archival records and illustrations, histories of the sport, and newspaper files, *A Great Game* delves into the fascinating early years of ice hockey. It tells of the hockey heroes and hard-boiled businessmen who built the game, and the rise and fall of legendary teams pursuing the Stanley Cup. With a historian’s perspective and fan’s passion, Stephen Harper presents a riveting and often-surprising portrait, capturing everything from the physical contests on the rinks to the battles behind the scenes and the changing social conventions of the twentieth century.

A century ago, rinks could melt, and by half time the blades screwed to the players’ shoes could be sinking in mud. It was during this period that the unsuccessful Toronto Professionals of 1908 and the victorious Toronto Blue Shirts of 1914 battled for the city’s very first Stanley Cup. Against the fanatical opposition of amateur hockey leaders, these “forgotten Leafs” would lay the groundwork for the world’s most profitable hockey franchise.
In paying tribute to these hockey pioneers and the contagious loyalty of their fans, Stephen Harper resurrects the rough and tumble history of hockey’s first decades. *A Great Game* will be illustrated with photographs of the game’s greatest arenas and earliest star players.

Like millions of other Canadians, Stephen Harper developed his love for hockey at a young age as he played at the arenas and on the shinny rinks and roads of his hometown. Today, long retired from his on-ice "career" with the Leaside Lions, he is serving as Canada’s 22nd Prime Minister, and is happily married to Laureen who, with their children Ben and Rachel, live in Calgary and Ottawa. A member of the Society of International Hockey Research with a particular interest in the early decades of the game, Mr. Harper is an amateur historian interested in exploring the sport’s impact on the people and places that define Canada. *A Great Game* is his first published work on the game of hockey.

All author proceeds from the book will go to the Canadian Forces Personnel and Family Support Services (CFPFSS). The specific fund that the proceeds will be donated to is the Military Families Fund, which provides emergency financial assistance to military families faced with unforeseen and often immediate needs that have resulted due to conditions of service.

A French translation of the book will be published.
Stephen Harper holds a hockey stick from the 1907 Stanley Cup final during a research visit to the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, Canada, December 2011.
Photo provided by Stephen Harper.