

McDonald's Ice Chips

OAKLAND FANS who crossed the bridge for last night's game had unkind comparisons of the Cow Palace with their Arena. They had some justice on their side. The roof was leaking in the rain and in the first period the puck got stuck in the boards and had to be pried loose.

One of the visitors in dodging the raindrops growled. "It's a disgrace." When reminded the Arena roof had leaked in the past, he replied, "Yes, but it only leaked in one place."

While the Seals have been told by the NHL to keep the Seals in Oakland doesn't trying to sell the club. Bill Torrey, executive vice president, said that efforts toward this end are being made and he would not rule out the Knox Brothers from Buffalo, who would be interested in operating the club in the Bay Area.

Torrey says that the decision of the NHL to keep the Seals in Oakland doesn't really change much. "We still have to put people in the rink," said Torrey. He says that in addition to all the worries the Seals have had, which could apply to other expansion teams, the Seals have had to contend with trans-Bay jealousies.

What Torrey doesn't seem to realize is that the fierce rivalry between the East and West Bay has been going on for years, and probably will continue for many more years, whether it's good or not.

And as Times sports editor Jack Bluth

notes, the Seals themselves have contributed to the detrimental effect the rivalry may have had on Seals' attendance. The Seals moved the club from San Francisco to Oakland. Bluth points out that the advent of the Raiders hurt 49er attendance, but he asks how much more would the 49er attendance have suffered had the rug been jerked out from under them at Kezar and they had moved to Oakland. Would loyal 49er fans have been any more loath to cross toll bridges to see the 49ers play in Oakland than Seals fans on the Peninsula and in San Francisco are to go to Oakland to see their hockey team play?

Carol Vadnais, the Seals' principal enforcer of law and order on the ice, maintains that he tries to avoid fights. "But somehow I always seem to be in them," he added sadly.

Vadnais, a young and exciting type of rushing defenseman, says the Seals are like the Montreal Canadiens in that they are a skating club. "But we can play it rough if we have to," he noted.

Lyn Patrick, of the St. Louis executive lineup, acknowledged before the game that the law of averages might allow the Seals to knock off the Blues, but he added, secure in the comfort of a big lead, "We can afford it." Patrick objected to the Blues' reputation as an old team. He contended it is composed of a good blend of youth and age, "of hungry youngsters and thirsty veterans."