

**\$209,765 Payment to Coliseum****Swig's Multi-Million Dollar Hockey Fling**

By ED SCHOENFELD

SAN FRANCISCO—"It was a costly experience. Very costly," Mel Swig commented as he reflected on his trials and tribulations as a hockey club owner.

"I'd say it cost me several million dollars," said the San Francisco real estate developer, who owned hockey clubs in San Francisco, Oakland and Cleveland over the past 16 years.

He's had it.

"I don't see a future for hockey on the National Hockey League level in this market," Swig said when asked why he won't be an owner again.

Swig just shelled out \$209,765.13 to Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, Inc., as a negotiated settlement for lost revenue, interest and legal fees since he moved the California

Seals from Oakland to Cleveland.

He's been out of hockey since selling the Barons (formerly the Seals) to a Cleveland syndicate.

Swig owned the San Francisco Seals in the Western Hockey League for five years (1961-66), the Seals in the NHL in Oakland for the 1975-76 season and the Seals in Cleveland for the 1976-77 season.

"I met a lot of nice people in hockey," he reflected. "I had a lot of nice kids playing for me.

"But," he repeated, "it's not pleasant to lose money."

Swig had been portrayed for years as a hockey fan fulfilling a dream as the owner of a hockey club.

"Oh, I enjoy the game," Swig said. "But, it was business with me.

"I had hoped to have built a building for hockey in San Francisco. I think it would have been successful."

Swig abandoned his plan to construct a building in the Yerba Buena Project in May of 1976 when he was unable to muster the necessary civic support in San Francisco.

President Robert T. Nahas of Coliseum, Inc. yesterday announced the receipt of Swig's payment.

At the time the Seals franchise was relocated in Cleveland prior to the 1976-77 season, there were still two seasons remaining on the Seals' contract with the Coliseum.

"Mel Swig has always been fair in acknowledging his contractual obligation to the Coliseum," Nahas said. "He has endeavored over a period of many months to reach an equitable settlement with us."

Nahas said Coliseum, Inc. has agreed to

drop its lawsuit against the NHL and former Seals owners and release them from further contractual obligations.

The \$209,765.13 will eventually be turned over to the City of Oakland and Alameda County as part of the Coliseum's annual net revenue payments, Nahas said.

Swig said he doesn't know exactly what his hockey fling cost because he is still waiting for his sale of the Barons to be finalized.

"I think prospects for the NHL look like they'll be better in future," Swig commented. "Particularly, if the NHL merges with the WHA. But, even if there is no merger, I think things look better.

"The players' salaries have gone crazy. I see a trend to lessen player budgets developing. This will help."

Swig will be an interested spectator. With several million dollars less in his jeans.