

L'OLYMPIADE AMÉRICAINNE

Nous avons réuni ci-dessous et nous publions par fragments ou in extenso les lettres ou télégrammes qui paraissent les plus propres à faire comprendre l'état de la question et les circonstances qui ont amené le Comité International à autoriser le transfert des Jeux de 1904 de Chicago à Saint-Louis.

The President of the International Olympian Committee, Paris

Chicago, nov. 26-1902.

Dear Sir,

It becomes the duty of the Directors of this Association to acquaint you with certain very serious embarrassments arising from a conflict in dates, occasioned by the postponement of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition until 1904, the year of the great quadriennial contests held under the auspices of your honorable Committee. The officials of the Exposition have informed us that the Olympian games if held in this City the same year, will be a menace to their enterprise and have invited a transfer of our contests from Chicago to Saint-Louis. We feel that we should fail in an essential duty, did we not clearly represent to the International Olympian Committee the altered conditions that confront us, owing to the position which Saint-Louis has assumed — a position new and unexpected, inasmuch as Chicago was led to suppose that the games were viewed with favor in Saint-Louis as a concurrent attraction which, by bringing people to this section of our country would increase the attendance at the Fair. We now know that because of the prestige of our city and the unprecedented public interest which has been awakened in the games, we are at the present time regarded as a dangerous competitor.

The scheme of the Saint-Louis Exposition provides for games and sports. In consequence of the postponement of the Fair,

which it is proper to say could not have been avoided, Saint-Louis is planning an athletic tournament for 1904, the year selected for our games. This means nothing less than rival contests at approximately the same time, with the attendant friction and confusion which would preclude success in either city.

We have no reason to believe that Saint-Louis would consent to aid our contests by abandoning her own — especially as in her eyes the Olympian Games in Chicago constitute a menace which she must, if possible, discourage. Lest we seem to overestimate the difficulties of our position, we would suggest that the Louisiana Purchase Exposition has fifteen million dollars in its treasury, is officially recognized by the government of the United States and acts with its sanction and assent. That it is in the power of Saint-Louis to carry on the Olympian games or any other contests as successfully as could Chicago, were we free from competition we certainly do not believe. It is our firm conviction that with our organization, our plans, with the natural advantages and prestige of our city, Chicago could under normal circumstances excel in such an undertaking all other American cities, with the possible exception of New York. But we feel that rival contests in Saint-Louis and Chicago would be disastrous and that Chicago should be willing to make any sacrifice to sustain the dignity of your honorable Committee. Should you therefore, in view of the attitude and invitation of Saint-Louis desire to transfer to that city the Olympian Games of 1904. Chicago would in the best interest of the sports cheerfully relinquish them. Lest, however, this suggestion should seem to qualify our appreciation of the great honor you have conferred upon us and the deep desire of Chicago to carry out our program as prepared, we would earnestly recommend, should it be within your power that you postpone the celebration of the games until 1905, and hold them in this city in that year. This Sir, is no precipitate advice. We have with the one sole purpose of doing our full duty to you and to the games, deliberated, pondered and consulted with leading citizens and representatives of every influential class. We understand most fully that a basic feature of the games is that they should be quadrennial and that an essential principle might be impaired by a delay. But after all, would not the success which would attend postponement— for which there certainly are precedents in ancient times — justify the step? Cir-

cumstances have arisen unexpected by both your Committee and ourselves. We are in presence of *vis major*. Should we then not strive to secure the largest possible results by accommodating ourselves to the conditions which present themselves, even though a principle may be strained to some extent ? The world's Fair at Saint-Louis is a national enterprise; and the honor of our government is in a sense involved in its success. To embarrass it in any way would invite the disapproval of our people ; whereas a postponement of the games in a spirit of broad-minded magnanimity would appeal to our entire nation and convert our present difficulties into a new and efficacious source of strength.

Begging you, dear Sir, to take into kind consideration the matters I have herein set forth, I remain.

Faithfully and respectfully your,

HENRY J. FURBER Jr.

President of the International Olympian Games of 1904.

Les extraits suivants de lettres écrites en Décembre par MM. H. J. Furber et W. R. Harper indiquent bien nettement l'état d'esprit des membres du Comte de Chicago.

..... Upon my arrival in New York a month ago, I was informed that the Exposition officials wished to confer with me at once in view of the conflict of dates arising through the postponement of the Saint-Louis Fair. I consented and in response to a telegram a delegation came on to New-York. They informed me politely but clearly that the Olympian Games in 1904 threatened the success of their Worlds Fair and that if we insisted in carrying out our program they would develop their athletic department so as to eclipse our games. While doubting their ability to excel our efforts, I recognized that they could injure us most seriously... They concluded by requesting a transfer of the games from Chicago to Saint-Louis. I informed them that this was a matter in which only the International Olympian Committee had power; but that when I reached Chicago our Board of Directors would discuss the matter. They requested me to permit a delegation from Saint-Louis to appear before our Board. To this we of course consented and two weeks ago we entertained the President of the World's Fair and several proeminent citizens of Saint-

Louis in Chicago. They repeated what in New-York they said to me and our Board of directors at a later meeting instructed me to lay the whole matter before you and ask for your advice.

H. J. FURBER Jr.

.... The Chicago Committee has been ready and is still ready to go forward with the plans. Our only desire was to show a spirit of accommodation to our friends in Saint-Louis. We did not wish to do anything which would interfere with their work.

W. R. HARPER.

Baron Coubertin, Paris.

Chicago, Déc. 25-1902.

We await answer to official communication asking postponement until nineteen five. If that refused we consent transfer to Saint-Louis if agreeable. Otherwise Chicago is prepared to hold games nineteen four as contemplated.

FURBER, president.

En plus des démarches auxquelles il est fait allusion ci-dessus, M. Francis, président de l'Exposition de Saint-Louis, télégraphia à M. Michel Lagrave, commissaire général de la République Française à l'Exposition le priant de demander en son nom au Comité International de consentir au transfert. Tout en regrettant que les Jeux se trouvent de nouveau annexés à une exposition universelle alors que l'expérience de 1900 avait souligné l'inconvénient d'un pareil voisinage, le Comité International, après avoir pris l'avis de personnes autorisées, n'a pas cru devoir n'y opposer. Il aurait paru étrange, en effet, qu'un comité dont le rôle consiste à unifier et à réaliser l'entente sportive partout où la chose est possible favorisât une situation propre à créer des divisions et des querelles intestines ; d'ailleurs du moment que la troisième olympiade demeurait Américaine conformément à la décision prise par le Comité en mai 1901, que le lieu de se célébration fut telle ville ou telle autre du territoire des Etats-Unir, la capitale n'étant pas en cause, peu importait; le Comité de Chicago en prenant l'engagement d'exécuter la décision du Comité International quelle qu'elle fut, obligeait celui-ci à peser avec

soin le pour et le contre d'une question dans laquelle sa responsabilité pouvait se trouver engagée. Au cas, en effet, où la rivalité des deux cités eût nui aux Jeux de Chicago, on n'aurait pas manqué de reprocher au Comité international d'avoir imposé imprudemment cette rivalité. Un seul point d'ailleurs se trouvait en discussion, l'ajournement des Jeux à 1905 étant de toutes façons inacceptable. Il est en effet de règle que les dates des Olympiades ne doivent pu être modifiées ; une Olympiade peut n'être pas célébrée, mais elle ne saurait l'être à une date autre que celle sur laquelle elle tombe; strictement observée dans l'antiquité, cette coutume sert également de base à l'organisation moderne. La solution de la difficulté se limitait donc à accepter ou à repousser le transfert.

Ce transfert a été autorisé. Nous venons d'indiquer les motifs auxquels le Comité International a obéi, croyons-nous, en donnant cette autorisation dont la nouvelle a été transmise simultanément à Chicago et à Saint-Louis par des télégrammes de M. Michel Lagrave au président Francis, et de M. de Coubertin au Comité Olympique de Chicago.

Tout annonce d'ailleurs que les Jeux Olympiques de Saint-Louis seront célébrés avec l'éclat désirable, et que les directeurs de l'Exposition réussiront à faire exécuter le programme très complet et très grandiose qu'ils ont conçu dans ce but. C'est eux comités nationaux qu'il appartient maintenant de travailler avec zèle pour que l'Europe envoie sur les bords du Mississippi en 1904 des contingents athlétiques dignes de la représenter au milieu de l'active et vaillante jeunesse Américaine.

NOTES SPORTIVES

La caractéristique du mouvement sportif en Europe est actuellement la progression constante du Football-Association. Ce sport, qui est née en Angleterre, a mis des années à traverser la Manche. Ce n'est qu'il y a une dizaine d'années qu'il fut introduit