

The International Olympic Committee and the Admission Cards issued to the Press at the Olympic Games

« When Rome gives a lesson to the International Olympic Committee » and « When 'L'Equipe' de Paris (who gave above title to following article) gives information to its readers))

“Mr. Avery Brundage and the highly venerable olympic areopagus seem to be chiefly concerned with the limiting of the rights of diffusing news... At the Cortina Session, there was a talk concerning the "reducing of the number of journalists, commentators, professional photographers, television and radio specialists.” The President of the International Olympic Committee made himself again conspicuous by an utterance similar to the one pronounced long ago by Mr. Thiers, when the latter referred to the future of the railways ? Speaking of the television. Mr. Brundage said "we have done without it for sixty years”.

The photographs which we are publishing herewith (As we do not possess them, it is impossible for us to reproduce them, Ed.) demonstrate clearly the point of view of the Italians, organizers of the Games to be held in Rome in 1960. The whole of the upper part of the olympic stadium, especially all the covered seats are to be reserved for the press. Above the press stand are to be placed the cabins reserved to the services of broadcasting and television. Below, we find the editorial room which is situated beneath the press stand and the room reserved to the T. V. commentators.

The Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) is of the opinion that the olympic concepts must have a wide diffusion abroad in order to reach the remotest parts of the world. This object can only be attained by granting facilities to the press in order to let it diffuse news either by means of publication, television or broadcasting, even if the box-office receipts suffer by it, for, however large the public attendance is in a stadium, this concerns only a very limited number of privileged persons...

It is unfortunate that the International Olympic Committee should show less concern towards the diffusion of the olympic idea and ideals, these sprung from and were diffused originally by means of the international press. It is even a more astonishing tact to observe that the International Olympic Committee, this great champion of amateurism, adopts a definite position in favour of organizers whose chief concerns are profits and the lucrative aspect of their enterprise.

To be sure, we are well aware of the cost of the organization of the O. G., and the candidates cities as well as the nations which are responsible for this organization are also well aware of its costs. To recuperate from this expenditure seems to be a matter of secondary importance as against the prestige gained by the organization of a manifestation which is moreover keenly sought after.

The reporter of *l'Equipe* has tapped at the wrong source of information when he alleges that the question of reducing the number of journalists, etc. was discussed at the Session of the International Olympic Committee at Cortina. This limitation was adopted by a vote which took place two years ago. It is incorporated in the set of new rules (which is being edited at the present time), and this rule has already been enforced at Cortina. In spite of this regulation, the newspaper *l'Equipe* has not been kept from being represented at Cortina by a team of ELEVEN reporters (S. E. & O.), all of whom received press admission cards. When one is the object of such consideration, it seems that a more gracious course to adopt would be to refrain from criticizing (wrongly).

L'Equipe blunders further when it communicates to its readers that "the Olympic idea was brought out by the international press"! Well, we shall refrain from passing any comment on this point, but we advise the writer of this article to read the "Olympic Memoirs" by Pierre de Coubertin, who, like the former, was a Frenchman and who in his quality of Renovator of the Games will let him know what he thought of the helpful collaboration of the press in those days! This journalist will get an idea then of what help Baron de Coubertin received from the press and it will be an eye opener..., poor de Coubertin, what courage and perseverance he had to have in this respect!

The reduction of the number of admission cards reserved for the press has no connection with the diffusion of the olympic idea, but it deals and concerns the admission and the granting of privileges to journalists who are OFFICIALLY recognized. By this means one can stop the infiltration of "parasites" of the press who are pseudo-journalists and who contrive to poison the existence of the genuine workers.

On the contrary, a sport newspaper such as *l'Equipe* should thank us for introducing a measure by which it is the first to benefit.

We are taken to task for being partial to the organizers while limiting the number of seats allotted to the press. In the same article, the writer congratulates the Italian organizers of the Games which are to be held in Rome in 1960, for the facilities which they propose to grant the press. But let us be clear on this point!

It is quite true that, while limiting the number of seats reserved for the press, the International Olympic Committee yielded to the organizers' entreaties. The International Olympic Committee derived

no advantage from it, but it knew that by adopting a judicious distribution system, as it is practised at present, it could not prejudice the development and growth of the Olympic idea. The International Olympic Committee agreed with the system adopted by the organizers of the 1952 Games. It adapted itself to the modifications proposed, as well as agreed with the experiment made in this respect. In order to fully understand what the exigencies of a certain press have been at Helsinki during the Games, it would be enough to consult. Mr. Erik von Frenckell who acted as President of these Games' Organizing Committee. We lay stress on the word "certain" as it refers to this particular section of the press represented by these bloodsuckers who have no connection whatsoever with journalism. The reliable newspapers, in which category, we of course place *l'Equipe*, ought to know that surely. The correct attitude would infer that serious newspapers collaborate with the International Olympic Committee in order to enable it to tight down these interlopers more efficaciously and this for their own interest which is jeopardized too.

The International Olympic Committee's decision is therefore not ludicrous though the lucrative aspect of the question escaped its notice as it often does!

The last paragraph in the article quoted above is truly priceless! It would truly be most entertaining to place the journalist in question at the head of an enterprise on the scale of the Olympic Games, and to hear him declare to his collaborators *what he wrote* that is to say: that recuperating expenses is altogether a matter of secondary importance! etc. What a leader he would make! For those who happened to be interested in the matter under discussion, we publish below the text of the new rule of the International Olympic Committee:

Seats will be reserved in the main stadium as follow (List of the various stands):

Stand E. For the press: 1000 maximum.
Photographers: 150 maximum. Radio and T. V. operators: 150 maximum.

In the case of the Winter Games the quota for the respective classes is to be: 400, 75 and 75.

In conclusion, we shall mention that the repartition by nation is left to the care of the Organizing Committee, and that the National Olympic Committees are responsible for the distribution of the admission cards in their respective countries.

We presume that the figures quoted above will inform the world sufficiently... as well as diffuse the Olympic idea.