

Melbourne Games were not seen on the Television

Nobody has been able to see the Olympics of Melbourne televised nor on the news reels. This caused a deep disappointment everywhere and sportslovers, all over the world, very rightly deplored the fact. Who

is to blame for this unfortunate occurrence ? We must explain right away that the International Olympic Committee while responsible for the attribution of the Games to a city, does not concern itself with internal

organizations which, at the time of attribution, become the responsibility of the organizing committee appointed to this effect. This was the case with television, cinema, newsreels service, photographers; press and broadcasting which represent organizations outside the control of the International Olympic Committee.

Concerning the matter of television especially, the duty to reach an understanding with the firms concerned incumbent to the Australian Committee. Everybody is aware that the Olympic Games are a heavy burden financially for a city. It is therefore perfectly normal that a city tries in everyway to recuperate some of the millions involved. The only possibilities of doing so (apart from subsidies) are the gate-money perceived as well as the sale of certain rights among which we find the rights concerning the diffusion of pictures. We heard that the Organizing Committee sold outright all its rights over the films of the Games to an American firm and that from a commercial point of view, it turned out to be bad business. Bound by contract, the Organizing Committee has only been able to offer insignificant crumbs of the feast table to the remaining world film market firms because the legal owner of the rights did not want any competition from other firms. It seems obvious that two important points have escaped entirely the Organizing Committee's notice, namely the asset gained by Australia had she been 'filmed' on all the screens of the world, small or large (and this alone was worth a fortune from the publicity point of view) while the second consideration consisted in stressing by means of pictures the aims of the Olympic ideals. No financial gain could possibly justify the omission of this two-fold consideration.

We were however anxious to be fully informed on this matter before putting forward our personal assertions. Herewith is the reply sent us by The Right Hon. W. S. Kent Hughes, president of the Organizing Committee :

"I must also thank you for the copy of the correspondence with the chairman of the Programme Committee of EUROVISION. The information contained in their letter to you of October 29th is entirely incorrect and has obviously been supplied by New-York. The B.B.C. Radiodiffusion and Eurovision,

together with the theatrical people, were all perfectly happy with the three minutes newsreel decision. It was the New York people, namely the N.B.C., C.B.S. and U.P., who, on receiving permission for the three minutes? demanded the three sessions of three minutes per day, namely nine minutes.

"If the nine minutes had been granted, there would have been no feature films at all, as neither the Television entertainment departments nor the theatrical people were interested in showing longer films of the Games if the newsreels were granted more than three minutes. We ourselves felt that the longer films were more important than the newsreels.

"As you well know, there are only a very limited number of camera positions in the arenas, and we have therefore had to run both the movie and still photographs as two separate pools, to which everybody has equal access and pays their proportion of the costs. Our film unit has organized no less than twenty camera teams in order to be able to supply all wants, but more particularly those of the athletic associations.

The untrue information has been circulated from New York in order to try and prevent all T. V. stations from showing any films on the Games. The agent appointed by us has not purchased the rights of the film, but is merely acting as our representative, and no passes for the arenas have been issued.

The position is that the newsreels can still obtain the three minutes per day if they are prepared to pay their proportion of the cost. 1,000 feet per day would be supplied from which they can select their 90 feet.

The whole disagreement has arisen because the newsreels are not satisfied with the ordinary three minutes per day — (they only used two minutes per day in Helsinki) — and want to take over the entertainment field as distinct from news. *In this respect, the New York T. V. authorities cabled all over the world offering to sell the highlights of the Olympics at a price which would have been very profitable to themselves.*"

(Let us add that in prevision of the Games of 1960 in Rome, adequate measures will be taken in time in order to assure a televised recording of these Games. *Ed.*)