
Gleanings concerning the Games

A very fine remark has been pronounced by The Right Hon. W. S. Kent Hughes, president of the Organizing Committee when, in a press conference which took place on the eve of the Games he declared :

I fought in the last two wars and I have been a prisoner of the Japanese ; it is perhaps because of this that I shall welcome the Japanese athletes all the more warmly.

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An inscription bearing the following slogan stood out written in white letters on the extreme top of the official table :

The Olympic Movement tends to bring together in a radiant union all the qualities which guide mankind to perfection.

Written just below was the following :

Scoring by points and by nations is not recognized by the International Olympic Committee.

It is the first time that this Olympic Rule has been asserted in such a spectacular way. The Organizing Committee deserves our congratulations for this, thus showing its readiness to carry out the International Olympic Committee's wishes.

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"The great majority of the sportsmen of the world realized that Melbourne represented the confirmation of a strong faith in peace."

(Marc Mayor, Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne.)

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Jesse Owens. The Prince of all athletes at the 1936 Games, whose reputation was illustrated in the film of Leni Riefenstahl, and who was the hero of all the flower of the world of sport twenty years ago, was present at the Melbourne Games. He came there as representative of President Eisenhower, and by a strange coincidence, travelled on the same plane as Mr. Avery Brundage. Michel Clare of *l'Equipe* who refutes conformism, but not to the extent to refuse the comfortable seat offered him in the Tribune of the press (is this not conformism ?) gave an excellent narrative in his paper *l'Equipe* of his meeting with Jesse Owens : "While contemplating this massive and thickly set figure of a man who was only recognizable by the characteristic features of his face, we became painfully aware of the tragedy due to the fact of growing old.

The smart turn out of the man who has been the most prodigious athlete of all times, failed to conceal the thickness of fat on muscles reduced to inactivity. As a film superposed on this vision, sprung incessantly to ones mind, images of the victorious champion of long ago, who remained unbeatable while in the plenitude of his finest human form. Jesse Owens thus gave us the most striking exemple of the intrinsic value of sport which resides chiefly in brevity, the ephemeral quality of which soon leave us with only beautiful memories dimed by the passing of time. We found there undoubtedly the lesson taught us by Olympism.

"Sport has an uplifting quality by the pleasure and enjoyment it gives us. It is beautiful on account of the spirit of brotherhood it foments in the Stadias. Sport also brings a consciousness of physical fulfilment but sport also exacts a painful ransom for, Jesse Owens, still young for the average men, is already old when one reflects on what he achieved in 1936 and which he will never be able to do again."

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The notion of asking athletes marching in procession through the arena at the Closing Ceremony to hold hands without consideration of nationality or race, was originally submitted to the Hon. Kent Hughes, President of the Organizing Committee, by a young Chinese, seventeen years old. This idea was considered so touching and symbolic that it was adopted at the Games and proved most successful.

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A thing happened which would have delighted the sociologists... When the Closing Ceremony of the Games came to an end, the enthusiastic crowd broke through the track and the grass as well as the barriers. Its solid mass looked like a swarm of bees. "The apotheosis of the Games lacked its customary dignity" was the comment of some of the extreme conformists. It may have been the case but it offered a spectacle of primitive fervour. The spectators, men, women and children as well as the old people all intermingled, wanting to touch all the objects which had been used in 'the rituals'. They touched the podium with reverence,

then knelt on the grass, inhaling the soil and plucking the grass. Carried away, the people went even further when they stormed the track, scraping with their nails the pink cinders which they carried home as precious keepsakes with as much reverence as if they were pilgrims. Happy Australians... The seed was sown, what harvests are to be reaped from it in future ?

This was already a good sign for the coming Games of Rome.

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Michel Clare declared that "the essential is that it has been possible to hold the Games at a time when civilization seemed to rock on its foundations, in a safe and remote part of the world, so very far away, even further than India and China, where to quote Baudelaire "the echoes of the perils clouding the horizon never penetrate."

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The Melbourne Games have broken many records. We propose to mention only three of them : the immense enthusiasm and great kindness displayed by the inhabitants of the organizing city. The postal services : the press sent over 7 million words by telegraph. Then 2 million of tickets raised £6,500,000, a magnificent financial effort which will greatly benefit the amateur sport of Australia. So much the better and congratulations to Australia...

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The German news agency I.S.K. has stressed the absurdity of classification by nations in the manner that a certain element of the Press has chosen to publish. Yet we have repeatedly laid emphasis on the fact (at the risk of repeating ourselves for the benefit of those who do not seem to wish to understand) that this type of classification has no validity. The I.S.K. has just published a classification list (the first two items of which we are pleased to be able to quote) which takes into consideration the factor of population and divides the number of medals won at Melbourne by the number of inhabitants of each country concerned. Thus the *Bahamas* finds itself at the head of the list (1 medal for 68,000 inhabitants), coming just ahead of *Iceland* (1 medal for 133,000 inhabitants). But leaving aside this humorous and fanciful method of classification, for which the agency I. S.K. is to be congratulated, our sympathy goes out to the Bahaman and Icelandic athletes who took part in the Games... and also won medals. Well done indeed !

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The Press is to be complimented for observing so well the recommendations of the International Olympic Committee which asked them to refrain from publishing fanciful lists on a points basis concerning the Olympic Games. The Press, however, obviously in order to get round this request, did not fail to establish lists of national

scores based on the number of medals won by each country. One cannot prevent the Press from doing this so long as there exists no system of classification-by nations within the Olympic Games. The classification by the number of medals won by each country may seem to be interesting, but it is a questionable practice. As it is against the established rule it will never be taken into account in the official Roll of Honour. We can, however, publish the total number of medals bestowed on the winning athletes, namely : 147 gold, 147 silver, and 157 bronze medals.

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The athlete who won the most medals is a woman, the Hungarian Anna Keleti who won a total of six medals — in Gymnastics, of course. Four of these were gold medals for Groundwork, Horizontal Bar, Parallel Bars, and the overall team event. She also won two silver medals (in individual and team events).

Here again let us take note of the undue proportion of 47 medals allotted to gymnastics alone, to which we shall allude elsewhere.

Mr. Avery Brundage speaks to the Press

The Olympic Games at Melbourne have been a tremendous success declared Mr. Avery Brundage, President of the International Olympic Committee in the course of a final Press-conference prior to his departure from Melbourne. "But", he added, "the passionate interest which arose in connection with the various contests has caused us perhaps to lose sight of the full international significance of this gathering of the youth of the world."

Whilst elaborating on this point of view, Mr. Brundage pointed out that in a troubled world a unified team representing both parts of Germany came to compete at Melbourne. and that certain countries having no diplomatic relationship with Australia participated in the Games under the same conditions as other nations. "It is not a matter of coincidence," continued Mr. Brundage, "that the International Olympic Committee has been proposed on several occasions for the Nobel Prize for Peace."

The President extended his thanks to the Organizing Committee as well as to 'all the live wires of the country' who had set up a new record with the help that they had contributed to set the dames afoot.

Referring to the technical aspect of the events, Mr. Brundage praised the high standard of the performances achieved, whilst taking into account the unsuitability of the season for many athletes coming from overseas. Once more the number of medals won in certain events such as gymnastics compared to the solitary medal rewarding the efforts of the best decathlon competitor provoked adverse comment and criticism

from the journalists present at the Games. Mr. Brundage admitted that it was unfair. "We are going into this problem" he added. "but it is very difficult to find a solution as it affects the various traditions and customs of some seventy countries." (The new rule, No. 41, fact, states : "in team events where the placing is based on results obtained in individual competitions, no competitor may receive more than one medal for the same performance." *Ed.*)

Questioned as to the likelihood of new sports being included in the programme of the Games, the President of the International Olympic Committee replied that the tendency was for the Committee to reduce the number of events in order to cut down the enormous expenditure borne by the Organizing Committees, and that he had encountered a definitely adverse opinion amongst his colleagues, particularly with regard to team sports.

Answering the criticisms which were expressed with regard to the organization of the Press service at the Games Mr. Brundage explained that all Organizing Committees are not equipped in the same way in this respect, and the only solution would be for the International Olympic Committee to have sufficient funds at its disposal to enable it to maintain a permanent staff of specialists, whose tasks would be to supervise the various aspects of the organization of the Games.

The wise comments of a politician

The Hon. Kent Hughes, President of the Organizing Committee of the Games made the following wise remarks : "Perhaps I may be allowed to speak about myself today. I find myself in the happy position of being both a politician and a sportsman. In my capacity as president of the Organizing Committee I often had the opportunity to

get in touch with the representatives of numerous countries. Thus in the field of politics. I would like to deal only with foreign affairs in order to put into practice what I have learnt through my contact with the Olympic Games. We politicians can learn a great deal from sport. I am convinced that we have made numerous friends abroad. The closing ceremony as we witnessed it should stand as a true symbol for us politicians."

A Flame burnt at Bucharest throughout the Duration of the Melbourne Games

A few hours after the Olympic Flame brought from Olympia shone on the Melbourne Stadium, a solemn ceremony commemorating the Olympic Games was held 20,000 Km. away at Bucharest. A symbolical flame was lighted in the large sports hall of Floreasca. This event was to coincide with the Olympic Flame and the flame was kept burning till the eve of December 8th when it was put out. This ceremony was witnessed by 5,000 spectators ; it was most touching in its simplicity and this ceremony which was organized "by the Rumanian Olympic Committee came to an end to the sounds of the Olympic Hymn. The veteran Rumanian athlete (Dinu Cristea) lighted the flame escorted by a group of fellow athletes of his native land, followed by a short address which was delivered by Prof. Gh. Teodoresco, vice-president of the Rumanian Olympic Committee.

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The Olympic Flag has been hoisted during the Games by the National Olympic Committees concerned, in following Cities :

BRUSSELS - TOKYO - LUXEMBURG
BERLIN - BARCELONA - PARIS... and
of course in front of Mon-Repos, headquarters
of the International Olympic Committee in
LAUSANNE.