
**THE REASONS FOR LOSS OF L. 200.000 SUSTAINED
DURING THE GAMES OF THE XVith OPYMPIAD**

Apolitical crisis cost the Melbourne Games £ 50 000 (about 145 000 dollars)

(Reported by *Sport*, Zurich). Whilst the Australian authorities have ordered an inquiry into the reasons for the loss of some £200,000 sustained by the Olympic Games of 1956, the principal members of the Organizing Committee have made known their opinions.

General Bridgeford, President of the Executive Committee, declared that there would have been no difficulty in making the Games a paying concern, but that the actual organization of the Games would have been bound to suffer as a result and would therefore have become an object of criticism.

An interesting proposal from the International Amateur Rowing Federation

Amongst the numerous suggestions submitted to the delegates at the Evian meetings in June past, the following one has especially drawn their attention. During the discussion, however it has been proved that, at least for certain sports, one would hit oneself against several technical and other difficulties. Nevertheless, this subject will be brought to the attention of the members of the International Olympic Committee at their Sofia Session in September next.

In view of the Melbourne Games, the Organizing Committee provided two Olympic villages, one was built at Heidelberg-Melbourne and the other at Ballarat. The first one offered the amenities of a real modern town, while the other Olympic village at Ballarat was definitely inadequate. It consisted in an agglomeration of barracks which were only covered with unlined corrugated iron sheets, single and bereft of isolated matter, so that our rowing men and boatmen suffered from the cold and draughts as the wind blew just as fiercely

indoors than out of doors. In spite of these primitive housing conditions, our athletes behaved as true sportsmen and roughed it willingly. No virulent complaints were heard, no sign of discouragement or ill-humour were seen. The Governing Bodies of the Rowing and Canoeing Federations did have cause to be proud of their athletes. I must admit that the Chief Supervisor of the Olympic village, assisted by all the Australian officials concerned, did all they could to help to maintain this fine spirit and certainly succeeded in doing so. We were most fortunate that no cases of serious illnesses were reported in spite of the fact that the members of the International Canoeing Federation and the Federation Internationale des Sociétés d'Avion, (International Amateur Rowing Federation) had to content themselves with only one restaurant, nobody complained and everybody was pleased with the food. These few incidental remarks lead me to the following proposal which I am putting to you,

At the village of Ballarat, the rowing competitors belonging to 25 countries amounted to more than 300 with the substitutes, they lived side by side, took their meals at the same table and spent their leisure hours in the same Recreation Room. The spirit of friendliness which prevailed among all the members of the various contingents of these two Federations responded exactly to the spirit wished for by the Renovator, Baron de Coubertin. From the point of view of sport, the Olympics were perfect and fully realized the standard set by the Renovator. Can we say the same from the Olympic ideal point of view ? Certainly NO ! Among the main objects pursued by the Olympics, one of the most important is to create personal friendships and to facilitate friendly intercourse between the competitors belonging to different nations. Also to provide open competitions on the running-track, in the stadia or in the events contested on and in the water, as well as help to create indissoluble bonds of friendship. Apart from the actual competitions, if our athletes desire to come in closer contact and to get to know each other better, they must fraternize by living together and thus help create this large family of sportsmen. Moreover, it was with a view to achieve this purpose that the International Olympic Committee conceived the idea of the Olympic villages. The fact of having athletes housed together, be it in barracks or houses, practising different sports but belonging to the same nation is a mistake. Our object is not for athletes belonging to *the same country* to get to know each other at the Olympic Games. But, on the contrary, we wish to give athletes belonging to *different nations* the opportunity to get to know each other and to make friends. In this respect, Melbourne and Ballarat have each in its own way, given us the practical demonstration of how to achieve or fail to achieve this aim.

The village of Melbourne-Heidelberg was a really modern city of a small size. The athletes belonging to different nations and practising different sports met only now and again in one or the other restaurant. Apart from this, they had little or no contact at all.

Whereas, at Ballarat, the rowers and boatmen representing more than 30 nations were constantly thrown together. Experience does show that, in future, we must plan the Olympic village in such a way that the athletes practising the same sport may be housed together in the same blocks or in the same dwellings, thus grouping together competitors going in for athletics, swimming, boxing, rowing, etc. You will readily admit that affinities and bonds of mutual interest do exist among competitors practising the same sport. They like to talk about their sport, discuss the various

styles, etc. etc. They travel to and fro their training centres in the same bus, they eat together at the same restaurant, sit at the same table and although they do not speak the same tongue, they manage to understand each other with the assistance of friends or interpreters.

I wish to lay stress on the fact that we did not all this into effect at Ballarat, and if I make you the proposal of grouping together and housing together in the Olympic village the competitions practising the same sport in preference to grouping them by nation, it is because the experience of Ballarat has proved conclusive.

Moreover, the scheme presents further advantages. If athletes practising different sports dwell in the same house, they cannot rest and relax as they should. Training times do not coincide and the starting time for the various competitions does vary also. While some competitors go to bed very early, competitors practising indoor-sports, who are returning late in the evening, are apt to wake up their fellowmates. The athletes who go to practice in the morning or in the afternoon disturb their comrades who wish to rest before their evening performances. In short, all these drawbacks are already known to us, as we experienced them in Berlin, Helsinki and Melbourne-Heidelberg.

Our proposal will certainly contrive to ease the heavy task which confronts the organizers. Each participating nation has its own Head of its contingent, and each sport of this nation has its own Chief of Delegation. Whereas, the latter shall be housed and will board with the athletes under his care, the Head of the Contingent will be housed in the special Administrative Buildings along with his private staff. He will call upon his Chiefs of Delegations to meet him daily at his office or as often as his work necessitate their collaboration. This course of proceedings, if adopted, will not interfere in anyway with the inspections he may wish to make of the various teams of his own country. The transport organization to the various training centres will also greatly benefit by this system.

I sincerely trust that you will not consider our proposal of grouping the athletes by sport in the Olympic village, as too startling, but nobody except our Rowing and Canoeing Federations have had a better chance to see for themselves how successful this innovation has proved in Australia. I entreat you to take steps in order to organize the Olympic village, already for 1960, on the lines suggested in our proposal.

The International Rowing Federation,
Its President :

GASTON MULLEGG.