

*What caused the elimination of the* **BOBSLEIGH**  
*events from the Programme at Squaw-Valley ?*

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When the Delegation representing the Winter Olympic Games at Squaw Valley presented their report at the Session in Sofia, they caused a sensation, as the secret of the text we publish below had been well kept by the Americans and came as a great surprise to everybody. We publish below the famous passage of the report to which we allude above :

Item 3. *The Organizing Committee has been concerned about the limited extent of the interest in the bobsleigh event in the 1960 Games. This Committee, this past Summer, wrote to the National Olympic Committees of all Winter Sports Nations as well as the 'Fédération Internationale de Bobsleigh & Tobogganing' to attempt to ascertain the number of nations which intend to participate in the bobsleigh competitions in 1960. results of this survey were very disappointing (see List below). Two nations answered that they definitely would compete in this event in 1960 with only five others stating that they probably would compete. It is difficult*

*to justify the expenditure of over 700.000 Dollars, the cost of building the bobrun, in view of the small and decreasing interest in this event. Thus, the Organizing Committee respectfully requests that the bobsleigh event not be included in the programme of the VIIIth. Olympic Winter Games. Etc.*

Thus, the International Olympic Committee at Sofia was suddenly confronted with a problem exceedingly difficult to solve. The sport of Bobsleigh has appeared uninterruptedly ever since 1924 in the Programme of the Winter Olympic Games. All the events in connection with this sport have taken place normally and no complaint has ever been submitted to the International Olympic Committee on the matter.

But could one reasonably expect the organizers to burden their budget with an expenditure of 700.000 dollars which are required to meet the cost of making a bobrun knowing that only two nations have *agreed definitely* to compete in the bobsleigh events ? Any sensible person would obviously reply

in the negative. The vice-president of the International Bobsleigh Federation and who is also member of the International Olympic Committee for Switzerland was present at Sofia, where he attended the *de bat es*. Greatly bewildered, he had to admit the fact that he had not been informed of any previous steps taken by the organizers of Squaw Valley, nor did he know anything of their inquiry into the matter, and least of all did he know about the request just submitted by the Delegation to the International Olympic Committee. It would have been a simple but easily made proof of courtesy towards the Vice-President present in Sofia, had the Americans informed him before-hand of the matter as they had lived side by side at the same hotel for three days previously. Whatever happened a decision had to be taken, and to the general

regret of all who had to solve the question, the petition made by the organizers of Squaw Valley was granted. Since twelve countries at least must enter their competitors in order that an event may be contested, it must be understood that even if the countries which replied 'probable', 'possible' or 'doubtful' were to go back on their decision, it would still not fulfil the conditions stipulated by the Olympic rules since there would be only ten entries classified.

To tell the truth, we could say that had the International Olympic Committee applied its rules to the letter, Bobsleigh should not have been included in the Olympic Programme because it is stipulated in Rule 30 that 'Only sports *widely practised in at least 25 countries* may be included in the Programme of the Olympic Games.'

### *Expected bobsleighrun participation*

Nations	YES	PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	DOUBTFUL	NO
Argentina					X
Austria					X
Belgium					X
Czechoslovakia					X
Liechtenstein					X
Spain					X
France		X			
Great Britain		X			
Italy		X			
Sweden		X			
Switzerland		X			
Germany			x		
Norway				X	
Poland				X	
Rumania	X				
U. S. A.	X				
	2	5	1	2	6

Yet the list published above mentions only *sixteen* countries and we are very doubtful if this sport is being *widely practised* in each of these countries !

As was to be expected, a storm of protests was raised from all quarters, particularly from countries which were likely to win one or several medals in the Bobsleigh competitions. The press, once more, re-echoed these protests and nationalism showed up once more under its true colours. The International Olympic Committee received several offers by telegraph in Sofia offering alternative sights for holding the bobsleigh events for 1960 to replace Squaw Valley who has decided against them. Among the list of offers, let us mention the Governor of New-York's suggestion in favour of Lake Placid ; the offer made by the Swiss Bobsleigh

Federation in favour of the Winter resort of St. Moritz, that of the Bobsleigh Club of Garmisch-Partenkirchen in favour of Garmisch. There again Olympic ruling forbids the chosen city which is to stage the Games to transfer or share her privilege with another city, thus an event cannot be held elsewhere than in the chosen city. (Yet, we are fully aware of the readers' opinions concerning the transfer of the Equestrian Games to Stockholm in 1956, but in that instance, it was a case of *force majeure* which ought not to be taken as a precedent. *Ed.*)

While we are writing these lines the matter is at a standstill, awaiting the Congress of the International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation) which is to be held next February when the question will certainly be on the Agenda of the Meeting.