

Comments on a decision

by *André G. Popliment*, Brussels.

We have been reading in the 61st issue of the Bulletin of the International Olympic Committee about the disagreement which arose between the organizers of "Squaw Valley" and the International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation on the subject of the elimination of Bobsleigh from the competitive schedule of the Winter Games of 1960. This reading prompts us to make a few suggestions which we beg to submit to those who are interested in this question.

1. Is it necessary to apply the rule that stipulates that only sports *widely* practised in at least 25 countries may be included in the Olympic Programme, as strictly to the cycle of the Winter sports of ice and snow as to the Summer Games? We do not think so. There are several countries which are not suitable from the point of view of the climate to a *wide practice* of some or even all the winter sports. Yet, in these countries, there

are to be found many enthusiastic sportsmen who go in for winter sports. Is it not the case in the "Lowlands" which hold their flat countries Skiing Championships in various other mountainous countries? Should these sportsmen not be encouraged? Therefore, it is obvious that the practice of Winter sports ought not to be put on the same footing, as far as the quantity is concerned, with the practice of the Summer sports which are much more in evidence everywhere.

2. We notice that the real reason for the elimination of the Bobsleigh events from the Squaw Valley Games, although they have taken place in all the Olympic Games ever since 1924 — is due to the fact that the Bobrun has to be built from the foundation, and this avers itself too expensive. But is this a valuable and plausible argument? What seems to me normal is to entrust the staging of the Games, on principle, to cities

which are already partly equipped for staging these Games and which can give the maximum of experience in their organization. Would the International Olympic Committee ever dream of entrusting the staging of the Summer Games to Gao, for example? where everything would need to be created in the way of building stadia, arenas, hotels, aqueducts and roads of approach? Our way of thinking is that it is more logical to give the staging of the Winter Games to a city which has proved itself, than to confer the running of these Games to a city or a country which offers no adequate facilities but sees the opportunity of creating a new Winter sport station. This may prove a dangerous process.

3. On this same line of thinking, it seems that the candidate cities ought to mention in their *application* the sports which they *pledge themselves* to organize; this programme would then be taken into account for the attribution of the Games.

4. The new rule which eliminates the "obligatory sports" and authorizes the organizers to choose a minimum of 15 sports among the 21 "Olympic sports" is not without danger either. It ought to be amended to the ends of requesting the publication of the Programme beforehand. In theory, one could imagine that a chosen city while applying strictly the rules would eliminate from its schedule of events the following: athletics, swimming, fencing, gymnastics and the equestrian sports, even football! Evidently, this is carrying the argument too far, but we have not forgotten what happened in Helsinki, for instance, when the organizers tried to eliminate or, at any rate, reduce the fencing events, is this advisable?

Do not let this hypothesis launch loud protests! the case of Squaw Valley is near at hand and should give us food for thought. We do not suppose that our old friend "Frégeo" is likely to oppose our views!

We propose to reply briefly to the judicious remarks made in the above article by Mr. Popliment:

Item 1. The rule, referred to in item 1, does not apply to Winter sports.

Item 2. We have already expressed our opinion on this matter, but it is evident, and we agree and share Mr. Popliment's opinion, that it would be preferable to entrust the staging of the Winter Games to a station which has already proved itself and is in possession of adequate facilities. If this had been so on the case of Squaw Valley, Bobsleigh would not have been eliminated so quickly from the programme. As far as this matter is concerned, we wish to point out that this question is to be reconsidered at the Tokyo Session.

Item 3. Mr. Popliment's remark is so logical that in the questionnaire addressed by the International Olympic Committee to the candidate cities, it is stipulated under letter *a)* "which sports do you propose to include in the programme?" Therefore this corresponds to the suggestion made by Mr. Popliment.

Item 4. There also satisfaction is given to Mr. Popliment because art. 30 of the Rules and Regulations stipulates among other things that the programme must be submitted to the International Olympic Committee for its approval at least two years before the Opening of the Games. The danger preconized by Mr. Popliment therefore does not exist. In its new Rules, the International Olympic Committee agrees to admit the presence of delegates of the International Federations at the Session when the cities present their candidature. The delegations will be consulted with regard to technical problems, thus a city wishing to obtain the staging of the Games will never make the blunder to propose the elimination of the basic sports competed in the Olympic Games.