

Definitive Decision to eliminate the Bobsleigh

from the Programme of Squaw Valley Games

This was the decision taken by the International Olympic Committee at its recent Session held in Tokyo. In so doing, it adopted the point of view, in the form which it had been put forward at Sofia, the previous year by the Organizing Committee of the Squaw Valley Games. As a result of the protest lodged by the International Federation of Bobsleigh and Tobogganing with the International Olympic Committee, the latter had agreed to reconsider this problem at Tokyo. In spite of the strong feelings aroused in the

Bobsleigh world, and in particular within the International Federation of Bobsleigh and Tobogganing itself, the thirty-four members of the International Olympic Committee, who met in Japan last May, were forced to a decision whereby this sport is to be eliminated from the 1960 Games.

It is the first occasion since 1924, - date of the first Winter Games - that the Bobsleigh event, the value of which no one will contest, are not to find its place in the programme. In our last Bulletin, we foresaw

that such a decision would be taken. What happened in fact was that, after the Congress held by the International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation at Garmisch-Partenkirchen last Winter, Count de la Frégéolière, President of this federation, made an appeal to the National Olympic Committees concerned to send in the entries of their Bobsleigh teams to the Chancellory of the International Olympic Committee. He fixed the closing date for the 30th of April. On the day which the Session opened at Tokyo, namely on May 12th, last, only FOUR National Olympic Committees had replied in the affirmative. Those in question were GERMANY, ITALY, SWITZERLAND and the UNITED STATES. France joined during the Session. In the face of such a situation, it would have seemed illogical to ask the American organizers to spend several thousand dollars on building a track. . . . The International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation was convinced that ELEVEN nations would participate ; at any rate, it had obtained a guarantee on the part of its *national federations*. What some people seem unwilling to understand, however, is that it is not the prerogative of these National Federations to make the final decision, it is on the NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES that the responsibility of entering the teams for the Games fall. Since only FIVE National Olympic Committees replied in the affirmative, it seems reasonable to suppose that nine of the others had any intention of sending one (or two) teams to Squaw Valley. Article 24 of the Olympic Regulations specifically states that *only the National Olympic Committees recognized by the International Olympic Committee have the right to enter competitors for the*

Olympic Games. Then, in article 34 it is set down that *'the entries* are to be submitted by the National Federations to *the National Olympic Committee*, so that they may, if *approved*, be sent to the Organizing Committee of the Games.

Under these conditions, there is certainly no reason to reproach the International Olympic Committee, because it was conscious of its responsibilities and because it was, to some extent, obliged to eliminate this sport, eminently favoured, from the programme.

Further, it has been brought to our notice that it is explicitly set down in Article 34 of the Olympic Rules that *'At least six weeks before the opening date of the Games, the list of sports and events in which a nation is taking part must be submitted to the Organizing Committee.'*

Now, at the moment, we are still eighteen months from the opening of these Games. To this remark, we would reply by quoting Article 30 which stipulates that *The programme of the Games must be submitted to the International Olympic Committee for approval at least two years before the opening date of the Games. No change whatsoever can be made after this date.'* For technical reasons also (the building of a completely new track), it was necessary to know as early as now if there would really be a sufficient number of nations intending to take part before running oneself in vast expenses.

It is true that Mr. Cushing, when he proposed Squaw Valley as a candidate in 1955, at the Paris Session, had promised whatever was wanted, without any restrictions, even to the building of a bobsleigh track...