

SQUAW VALLEY DEFENDS PLANS FOR SKI EVENTS

SAN FRANCISCO. — Faced with possible major action by Scandinavian ski officials in protest against present arrangements for Olympic cross-country events in 1960, the Olympic Winter Games Organizing Committee has characterized the whole incident as a 'misunderstanding'.

The committee's release quoted Wendall Broomhall, Technical Advisor on cross-country, as saying the Scandinavians' criticism was premature and was apparently based on misinformation about the plans at Squaw Valley.

Main Complaint

The main complaint attributed to Swedish Ski Association President Sigge Bergmann was that the cross-country races will be held too far from the main site. Other criticisms have been that the courses are too high above sea level, and that snow conditions are far from ideal for the Nordic events.

In answer to these objections, Broomhall stated the distance was no further, with respect to elapsed travel time, than skiers had to travel at Oslo, Norway, Olympics in 1952, where the distance was of appr. 130 km. He said the Scandinavians are particularly concerned about the other conditions since they have no alpine terrain in which to train. But he further stated that negotiations are under way to bring Scandinavian racers to Squaw Valley for the North American trial events, this February.

Replying to the Scandinavians' claim that California organizers had ignored European advice on cross-country events, Broomhall said he had worked closely with International Ski Federation technical advisors, particularly Knut Korsvold of Norway, and Sigge Bergmann. He did confirm, however, that the cross-country arrangements were under scrutiny, and might have to be revised after the International Ski Federation Congress in June of 1959.

*

Editor's note. One thing strikes us in this controversy which has also found mention in the columns of the press. The Scandinavians claim that the competitors will have to get up at three or four o'clock in the morning in order to be in time for the start of these races, scheduled for eight o'clock. The organizers affirm that the distance of 12 miles can be covered by plane in ten minutes. We are of the opinion that the conditions are infinitely better than the 130-km. (appr.) distance from Oslo, where the competitors were quartered for several days, far away from the Olympic Village and separated from their sports leaders. This will not happen at Squaw Valley.

Press Release given out on Dec. 4th 1958

Following wrong informations spread by the American and European Press regarding the Organization of the VIIIth Olympic Winter Games, the President of the International Olympic Committee has asked Mr. J.-L. Bingham, Executive Director of the Olympic Committee of the United States, to take a trip to Squaw Valley and to give him a detailed report on the situation. Mr. Brundage met Mr. Prentis C. Hale, President of the Organizing Committee, last week, at his office in Chicago, and will go himself to Squaw Valley this winter.

Statement on VIIIth Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley

The enthusiastic report just received from J. Lyman BINGHAM, Executive Director of the United States Olympic Committee, following his recent visit to Squaw Valley, has confirmed other information in my possession on the progress of the preparations for the VIII Olympic Winter Games.

The plans approved by the International Federations and the International Olympic Committee are being followed scrupulously and work generally is ahead of schedule. Many of the facilities will be in use this winter and the balance will be completed in ample time. At the moment 70% of the constructions are completed.

The International Olympic Committee has complete confidence in the ability and integrity of President Prentis Hale and the other members of the Organizing Committee which is in charge of this great festival of youth. We are fortunate to have men of such high calibre as well as Chairman Charles BLYTH and his associates on the California Governor's Committee, contributing their services to this important enterprise. I feel certain that they will stage the Games in a manner that will be a credit to the State of California, to the United States of America, and to the Olympic Movement.

It is apparent that altogether too much publicity has been given to the vindictive attacks of discharged employees.

Avery Brundage
President, International Olympic Committee.