

*After the Sapporo Games, and the considerable expenditure involved - not only for the sports facilities and installations but also for the Olympic Village and the infrastructure indispensable for an event of this size - it may be wondered whether the present gigantism of the Olympic Games and the exaggerated emphasis on prestige do not contain the seeds of their own destruction, owing to their very lack of moderation.*

*Considering the tremendous financial burden they represent, the temporary economic upheavals they cause, the complexity of the increasingly tentacular organisation they require, does it still make sense to go on awarding to a single town the honour of holding the modern Olympic Games?*

*This extremely topical problem is at present the subject of quarrels and arguments all over the world. We do not intend to take up the argument here again, but simply to contribute to the widest possible dissemination of information on this subject.*

*Let us look therefore, four years after the event, at the town and region that celebrated the 10th Winter Olympic Games: Grenoble and the department of Dauphiné (France).*



February 1968 - the eyes of the whole world were focused on Grenoble. For a few days, the space of the Olympic truce, all the complaints and pessimistic forecasts, all the warnings and worries were forgotten. All that counted were the exploits of the Nordic and Alpine skiers, the ice-hockey players, and skaters.

But once the flags were lowered, the stadiums deserted, and the Dauphiné left to itself, life resumed its normal course...

Normal? ...Was that possible after the Olympic typhoon?

When, in 1962, Dr. Albert MICHALON, the Mayor of Grenoble, submitted his town's candidature, the people of Grenoble thought only of the prestige for their region, which for the last 30 years had been expanding fast both demographically and industrially.

## THE VITALITY OF GRENOBLE

A provincial capital of some 60,00 inhabitants at the beginning of the century, Grenoble did not top the

## GRADUAL ASPHYXIATION

This picture is not without its darker side. The lack of communications made Grenoble an enclave.

Other sectors of activity stagnated: agriculture, textiles, timber, metallurgy, building. With the exception of a public works concern, few new factories were set up in the region.

In 1960, Grenoble still boasted some of the most modern factories and laboratories in France, but its railway station dated back to Napoleon III's day, and fourteen level-crossings impeded traffic on the main roads. *"The urban facilities existing in Grenoble correspond to the needs of a town of 80,000 inhabitants, whereas its need are those of a town of 300,000,"* admitted the authors of France's 5th Plan, while none of the buildings in the town had running water above the second floor.

Thus, after the 28th January, when they applauded the International Olympic Committee's choice of their town for the 10th Winter Olympics, the people of Grenoble soon became aware that they had *"taken the plunge"* without fully realizing the extent of the task awaiting them.

## AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Right from the start, however, two facts became evident: the International Olympic Committee entrusts

100,000 mark till just after the Second World War. In 1962, the town had nearly 250,000 inhabitants. It is making ready to accommodate 600,000 by the year 2000.

In the nineteenth century, the harnessing of the water power placed Grenoble in the front rank of French industrial towns. The metallurgical industries followed in the wake of the electrification and industrialization of the higher valleys. This sudden growth exercised a magnetic effect on other sectors of activity.

By their growing reputation in France and abroad, Grenoble's industries (60,000 workers: metallurgy, gloves, artificial textiles, foodstuffs, electrical engineering, public works, chemicals..) gave this city the image of a heavily centralized provincial town possessed of the greatest vitality.

Grenoble owes a large part of its success to the association of the University and industry, based on a development of the resources of the mountains, and a study of all the technologies related to electricity. This contributed greatly to *"polarising,"* on the spot, the whole of the University's applied research to industry (University campus of St. Martin d'Hères, 25,000 students, i.e. more than the University of Berkeley in the United States).

the Games to a city, but no matter how flourishing and prosperous it may be, it cannot possibly bear the whole burden of the expense of organising them alone and has to call on the nation for help. Thus it was feared that the French government might try to exploit this opportunity for its sole benefit (*higher interest of the nation*) and that the initial assistance might not be followed up.

The Games are a sports event, but their renown is such that they attract hundreds of thousands of visitors, who have to be welcomed, housed, fed, transported and provided with entertainment. This task quickly becomes as important for the organizers as the sporting side of the event.

For Grenoble and the neighboring region, the Games provided an opportunity of raising money, the government's and the sums that the communes were able to borrow at exceptional rates of interest (5.25% over a period of 25 years). And, above all, they were a means of "*shaking up*" the French civil service by forcing it to cut red tape and push matters through at record speed. They made it possible to put through or implement schemes that had been prepared a long time previously.

## FIRST RATE SPORTS FACILITIES

The Organising Committee of the Olympic Games, created on 10th July, 1964 by a Constituent Assembly of 340 members, appointed Dr. Albert MICHALON as its President. The executive committee of eight members, included, in addition to the presidents of the French winter sports federations, two representatives of the communes and two representatives of the department. The Board of Directors numbered twenty ex-officio members (the three members of the International Olympic Committee for France: Count Jean de BEAUMONT, President of the French Olympic Committee: Mr. Armand MASSARD and Mr. François PIETRI) and twenty-one members elected at the General Meeting by secret ballot. Dr. HERAUD, Head of the National Institute of Sport, was appointed general manager.

The first job of the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games was, of course, to build the sports facilities and installations indispensable for the holding of the events, not only in Grenoble itself: ice complex - ice stadium (12,000 seats), skating rink (already existing), speed-skating circuit, but also in the neighboring communes: cross-country ski track at Autrans, ski-jump (St. Nizier 90 m., Autrans 70 m.), toboggan run at Villars de Lans, bobsleigh run at Alpe d'Huez, Alpine ski track at Chamrousse and Alpe D'Huez (modification



*President BRUNDAGE inaugurates the 90 m. jump at Saint-Nizier. From left to right: Messrs. Hubert DUBEDOUT, Mayor of Grenoble, Maurice GLEIZES, Vice-President of the C.O.J.O., President BRUNDAGE, Dr. Albert MICHALLON, President of the C.O.J.O.*

of courses and profiles, and of existing facilities and installations).

All these projects left behind after the Games were subsequently unanimously appreciated and remain among the best on our planet today.

## GRENOBLE TODAY

In four years, Grenoble took on a new look, for it was mainly the field of public facilities and infrastructures that benefited from the acceleration described above.

To take a few examples:

- Moving of the Grenoble-Chembéry railroad, leading to the abolition of the fourteen level-crossings that strangled the town, and the construction of a new ultra-modern station;
- Creation of an express line through the town;
- Moving of Eybens aerodrome (which prevented any expansion towards the South) to Saint-Geoirs, providing twice-daily connections with Paris, Nice, Lyons...;
- Creation of the southern road network (new town at Echirolles);
- Indispensable improvement of telecommunications;
- Replacement of construction of administrative or public

buildings scaled to the needs of Grenoble today: Town Hall, Police Station, Fire Station, Main Post Office, South Hospital, Home of Culture, Exhibition Palace, National Music School, auditorium...;

- The very much demanded freeing of 110 acres of military land in the centre of town;
- Construction of modern housing (Malherbe centre - 600; Olympic Village - 2,000) and socio-cultural facilities (Young workers' home, university city, social centre...);
- Finally, and above all, the start of the opening up of Grenoble to the world: construction of sections of motorway in the direction of Lyons and Geneva; improvements in the rail network; considerable work on the roads connecting Grenoble to the Olympic resorts, appreciably reducing the time taken.

At the same time, the town's hotel facilities were transformed. Two new hotels were built, a dozen others modernized. Within the space of a single year, 600 bathrooms were installed by Grenoble hotelkeepers. Some thirty new restaurants were opened up.

## THE COST OF THE GAMES

All these improvements naturally cost not only the government, but also the people of Grenoble and the inhabitants of the other organising communes a great deal of money: 112 million francs in all, i.e. a hundredth of

France's budget. The town of Grenoble had to provide roughly 20%. Its budget was doubled, the taxes paid by its inhabitants were multiplied by 2.3. Every year, the town had to repay about 14 million francs, i.e. nearly 1/10th of its budget.

The Organising Committee of the Olympic Games, having met with a deficit of about 85 million francs, had to accept an exceptional endowment from the French government.

This was the position on the eve of the Games.

## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Questions were already beginning to be raised:

- What would become of the sports facilities, which were so costly to run? (A day's operation of the ice stadium: one million francs; speed-skating circuit: 70,000 francs a month...)
- What were they to do with the ski jumps, the bobsleigh and toboggan runs, the speed-skating installations? The very small number of those who practise these sports did not warrant the sums involved;
- What would happen when the Olympic sites were closed:

3 to 400 of the 17,000 workers employed had already been dismissed;

- Would the cost of living in Grenoble continue to climb at the same Olympian rate?
- Would the number of tourists be sufficient? Had the promotion campaigns not been started too late?
- Finally, and above all, would Grenoble after the Games be able to continue to count on national solidarity, i.e. on the government, or was it not likely to be told, "*We've already done enough for you*"?

In fact, the people of Grenoble were afraid that the Games might be just a passing glorious blaze, for they knew only too well that the days after festivities are often sobering and difficult.

Four years after the event, let us take stock of the situation and try to answer these questions.

## STOCK-TAKING

The use and economic running of the Olympic sports facilities seem to have been taking care of.

### In the region

St Nizier: The big jump has been taken over by the government. It is the only one existing in France. International competitions are held there every year.

Autrans: The resort continues to operate its 70

m. jump. It has become the National Ski Jumping Training Centre, under the patronage of the French Ice Sports Federation. A great many training courses (oxygenation, fitness courses) make possible the full-time use of the premises. Autrans has, in addition, become one of the European cross-country skiing centres.

Villars de Lans: The upkeep of the toboggan run is ensured by a team of volunteers. Those who use the centre include the French Ice Sports Federation for toboggan training and races; spel-eologists, the armed services and young people coming to be initiated into all mountain sports. After conversion, the buildings at the start and finish are used as reception and accomodation centres.

Alpe d'Huez: A tricky problem: the bobsleigh run was naturally the installation that raised the most problems and the greatest controversy. In fact, the site proved unsuitable, and led to an expenditure out of all proportion to the number of those who practise the sport (5.5 million francs for some forty licensed bobsledders in the whole of France). Its operation and upkeep cost in the neighbourhood of 250,000 to 300,000 francs a year, an amount that the commune of Alpe d'Huez is obviously unable to afford on its own. After momentarily considering using the refrigerating plant for an artificial skating rink, it seems that

it has finally been decided to use the run as it is (for courses, training, races...) so as to preserve the only valid run in France. Which might perhaps make it possible to increase the number of participants.

#### In Grenoble

The ice stadium: At a cost of 3.5 million francs, the ice stadium has been converted into an indoor sports complex, making the "Palais des Sports" the biggest "omnisports" hall in France, at the same time as an entertainment and congress centre. A central tartan track can be used for all track events (training and competitions): athletics, thanks to a 180 m track (4 lanes), a sprint track (6 lanes), pits for jumping (long jump, triple jump, pole vault and high jump), space for throwing (discus, javelin, etc.); cycling - a 210 m. cycle track 6 m. wide has been added to these other facilities.

Large scale events are held here: cycle races (the revived "6 days"), French boxing, gymnastics, and figure-skating championships, world ice-hockey championships, European indoor athletics championships.

It also provides a wonderful opportunity for the physical training of school-children, and the practice of various specialized events.

The speed-skating cir-

cuit: the much criticized speed-skating circuit is now used all the year round.

The French Ice Sports Federation keeps it under ice for roughly a hundred days a year (i.e. a month more than planned). The cost is shared between the government and the town.

With the coming of the warmer weather, roller-skating takes over. Both these sports have expanded considerably:

- Some 15,000 learned speed-skating during the school year 1970-1971. 64 hours of use a week however (20 h. by clubs, 44 h. by the public and schools) requires considerable organisation and a large staff;
- A roller-skating school has been started for children, who are thus able to practise on one of the fastest tracks in Europe.

## A DYNAMIC SPORTS POLICY

The creation and use of these facilities coincided with Grenoble's implementation of an overall sports facilities plan for the town. In the meantime, the dynamic and efficient Mr. DUBEDOUT was installed as mayor of Grenoble. The interest in sport roused by the Games is certainly the factor that has contributed most to speeding up the completion of this plan and led to the drawing up of a second plan.

The area of sports grounds and playing fields has risen from 215,582 sq.m. (1965) to 537,895 sq.m. (1970) - roughly 53 to 132 acres. This includes covered facilities (13 gymnasiums/3 more planned, 3 swimming pools/3 more planned, 9 tennis courts, 1 bowling green), and open-air facilities (16 tennis courts, 8 stadiums, 23 physical training areas, playing fields, 1 shooting range).

## A PREREQUISITE - FULL USE

The most remarkable thing about these schemes was the care taken to set up these facilities in relation with schools or in their vicinity. This step answered a twofold purpose:

- to satisfy the needs of students to the maximum, by enabling them to go in for physical activities and sport;
- to make full use is the prerequisite for the operation of these facilities. Schoolchildren, members of sports schools, associations and clubs, and the housing district unions follow each other uninterruptedly from 8 a.m. until 11 p.m.

The main emphasis has been placed on the new districts owing to their greater needs and the less difficult problems regarding space, but the older districts are not forgotten either.

All this raises problems involving the full use of the available time, calendars and supervision, which the



*The ice complex in the heart of Grenoble.*

Municipal Sports Office is trying to solve. Finally, it is necessary to organize training camps and refresher courses, and provide individual sports equipment.

### Organisation

The most visible result of the Olympic Games, in this field, was the influx of trainers and technicians responsible for running and organising the new facilities and at the same time placing their special skills and know-how (speed-skating, roller-skating, judo, football...) at the disposal of the town (schools and clubs). The presence of a number of Olympic or world champions exercises a very definite attraction on the young (Robin for wrestling, for example). The Olympic Games have also helped publicize little known sports or those with few followers, owing to the lack of proper facilities (ice-hockey, ski-jumping, speed-skating, cross-country skiing...). The most spectacular developments have been in the fields of ice-hockey and speed-skating.

The work of those in charge, who have succeeded in keeping alive and widening this surge of interest, has been vital here and should be emphasized most strongly.

### THE CONTINUANCE OF THE EFFORT

As far as the town is concerned, the main concern is to ensure that the investments made at the time of the Olympic Games are continued. For this, three main difficulties have to be overcome.

### The new towns

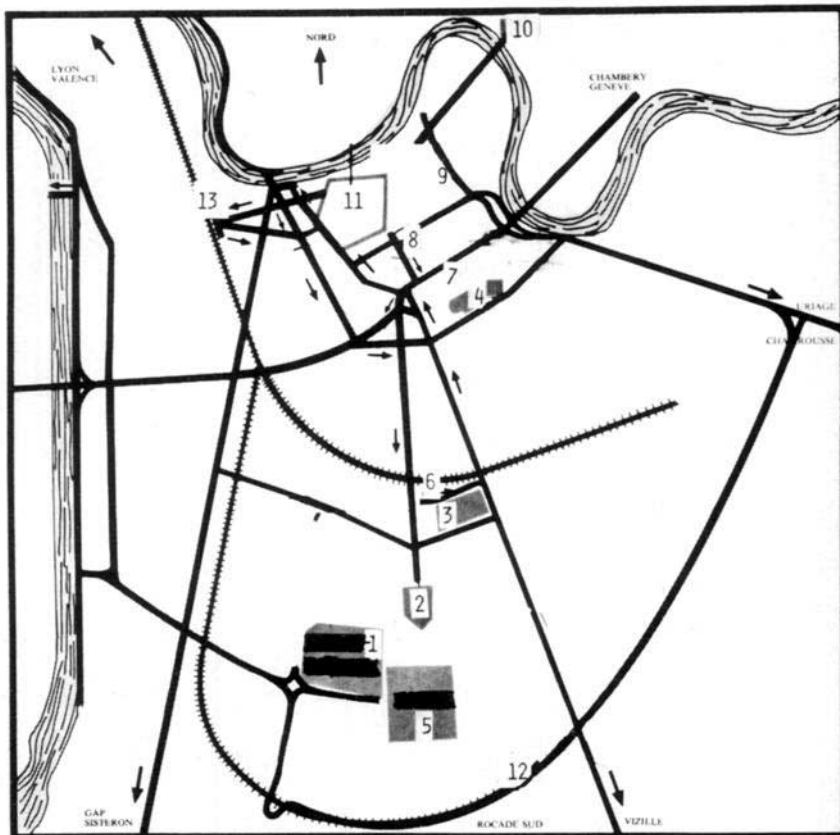
The main difficulty is the structure of the Grenoble built-up area. Owing to the surrounding mountains, its uncoordinated growth let it to develop in a Y-pattern.

The "*Town Plan*" drawn up by the town planning department represents an attempt to tame this growth, and the Games gave the initial impetus for the building of a new town of 100,000 inhabitants to the south of the city (Olympic village at Echirolles).

In addition to this growth, there is also the matter of continuing the work, begun during the Games, of remodelling the heart of the old town without, however, destroying its life and essential character (This is the spirit of the operation being carried out, at present, on the islet of Crès-Cloîtres) and of continuing its modernisation (parking silo for 509 cars in the centre of town, reservoirs at Bresson: 40,000 cu.m., hospital in the north at Les Sablons, regional slaughterhouse at Fontanil...).

### The end of isolation

The second difficulty to be overcome lies in Grenoble's gradual discovery of the geographical, economic and tourist solidarity of the towns along the Valence-Geneva axis, which represents a gateway to northeastern



1 Village Olympique/Olympic Village 2 Stade Olympique/  
 Olympic stadium 3 Centre de presse/Press center 4 Patis-  
 noires/Skating Rinks 5 Gare routière/Cars station 6 Mai-  
 son de la culture/Cultural center 7 Hôtel de ville/City hall  
 8 Préfecture/Department center 9 Hôtel de police/Police  
 station 10 Centre hospitalier/Hospital 11 Centre ville/  
 City center 12-13 Gare SNCF/SNCF station

Europe and a natural counterpart to the Rhône-Rhine axis, which can and must be developed.

#### In search of a role

The third difficulty is of an administrative nature. Grenoble has never benefited from any measures that might have been favourable to it and which might seem its due. French experts would seem to have overlooked the real value of the powerful immigration to this town.

Consequently, Grenoble lies, at present, at the crossroads of two seemingly contradictory temptations: that of believing in the role of "*pilot town*" frequently attributed to it and living in a state of euphoria produced by the undeniable improvements... and that of despairing sometimes of the national solidarity from which it benefited at the time of the Olympic Games, but which it would like to see continued in a more permanent form, by being given a status that other lesser towns have possessed for a long time now.

#### **GRENOBLE, THE OLYMPIC TOWN-A NAME, A LEGEND**

The fame of the Games, France's victories, enhanced the prestige of "Grenoble," not only in France, but also abroad, for with the public nothing succeeds like suc-

cess. Students, foreigners, the young (particularly executives) are not indifferent to sporting glory. Industrialists appreciate the indirect publicity from which they benefit tremendously, the aura of dynamism, of technology, of avant-gardism, and of the symbiosis between university and industry, that is reflected in all Grenoble's activities: this is the "*legend*" of Grenoble.

The sports goods industries have experienced an exceptional growth, directly attributable to the Games and the French victories (opening of the American winter sports market).

The development of winter sports is of greater benefit to the resorts around Grenoble than to the hotels and shops of the town itself. The latter cater mainly to transit type tourism (2 nights on an average) or technical (engineers and specialists attracted by the laboratories and key industries). Permanent tourism is mainly accounted for by the people of Grenoble themselves, who find, on-the-spot, the possibilities of escape needed to fill their weekends.

And even if this rather exceptional state of affairs results in a very large immigration to Grenoble, it does practically nothing for the hotel trade. Hence, the vital necessity for it to encourage a tourism of congresses, meetings, and exhibitions benefiting directly from the facilities and publicity created by the Olympic Games. This idea seems to be meeting with success (26 congresses in 1968: International Exhibition of Winter Sports Goods, International Exhibition of Mountain Technology and Development...).

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OLYMPIC MEDAL

Paradoxically, the Olympic Games which stimulated a vast programme of transformations, have had an ambiguous effect in this field.

The equipping of the big resorts, the construction of aerial cableways and ski-tows, the organisation of tourist parties from Lyons, Paris or via foreign agencies, tend increasingly to take matters out of the hands of the local tourist agencies, whose role seems to consist merely of supplying information as to the capacity of receiving and accommodating a client recruited elsewhere on contract.

The main profits pass into the hands of banks, and commercial and industrial investment companies dealing in the organisation of leisure and tourism, most of which are not from the region.

Even so, the increasing flood of tourists and sportsmen flocking to Chamrousse, Alpe d'Huez, Alpe de Grand Serre, Villars de Lans, St. Nizier, Sappey... (approximately 2 million tourists) brings in a by no means negligible income to Grenoble and the region.

All this has repercussions on the town's commercial, financial and administrative activities: 5,000 people employed in administration and public

service departments, 2,000 in banking and financial activities, 10,000 in trade, and in particular, the retail trade which offers a very wide range of products, from the consumer articles and commodities of current use, indispensable to the people of Grenoble, to the luxury items sought by certain tourists.

## GRENOBLE? . . WE'VE SEEN IT!

The Games undoubtedly brought Grenoble and the region a certain number of advantages. The tremendous publicity carried out at the time is the main reason for this. The whole world heard of Grenoble, its exceptional accomplishments, its advance in regard to applied research, technology and pure research. Grenoble's achievements in foreign countries have met with renewed interest. Grenoble's sporting and tourist vocation has successfully completed this picture, by closely associating key activities and leisure.

The quality of the industrial sites, of the young and dynamic manpower, the quiet daring of the plan for the development of the region, all these points have been developed and commented on at length in newspapers all over the world.

The television too, by revealing to hundreds of millions of people on all continents the facts about Grenoble, has made a tremendous contribution to promoting the "Grenoble" image in the world.

The impact of this publicity had, in fact, been carefully calculated by the organisers who did everything in their power to ensure its success. The working conditions and accomodation for journalists were highly praised by all who used them. Over 3000 fully accredited journalists (more than twice as many as at Innsbruck) stayed in Grenoble, each publicizing in his own way the capital of the Dauphiné.

## THE GAMES HAVE GIVEN GRENOBLE A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

By way of conclusion, we can say that while the preparations for the 10th Winter Olympics were very costly, they set in motion a programme of transformation and modernization of the town under exceptional conditions owing to the requirements involved in the organisation and running of the Games.

Nevertheless, the financial burden continues to weigh heavily on Grenoble. If the breaching of its isolation by

the breakthrough towards Geneva and Turin is not followed up rapidly, Grenoble may well succumb under the weight of its debts.

The Olympic Games served as a catalyst; they started a reaction that was, right from the start, beneficial for Grenoble and the region.

It is up to those who were responsible for this to ensure that the reaction continues, and grows, failing which all the work accomplished and all the sacrifices made may well have been for nothing.

Part of the challenge has already been won. It is now up to Grenoble to overcome opposition to progress and barren envy.

It has never been known to lose.

Alain COUPAT

