

Los Angeles — 1932 — The Games are open

Mr John Apostol Lucas, Sport historian and professor at the Pennsylvania State University, found the speech which was delivered on July 30, 1932, by Robert Gordon Sproul, during the Opening Ceremony of the Games at Los Angeles. We thank him for giving us this opportunity of reproducing this document.

The Tenth Olympiad was opened at 2 p.m. this afternoon with the hope that these games will help the life of men to higher physical, spiritual and moral values; each youth character and rugged purpose, courage and self-sacrifice; promote the love of play, the reciprocity of good will, and the sportsmanship in which shall be washed away the immemorial feuds of mankind.

This was expressed by President Robert Gordon Sproul of the University of California in the dedicatory address delivered immediately preceding the administration of the Olympic Oath to the assembled contestants.



*Mr. Robert
Gordon
Sproul.*

*Addresses 100,000 People,
President Sproul said:*

“There is no ordinary crowd, this assemblage of more than a hundred thousand individuals, and it is no ordinary occasion that brings us together in this great coliseum in the magic city of Los Angeles, but yesterday a pueblo and today a metropolis. We come to emphasize by our presence the importance of this peaceful gathering of representatives of the nations of the world and to witness the Xth Olympiad of modern times in the spirit of the ancient Olympiads, which never grows old. The Olympic games of today are the heirs of a great tradition, for they are a revival of the games of ancient Hellas founded, men thought, for his father Zeus, by mighty Heracles, prince of athletes.

“Those games were not only physical contests. They were a solemn reunion in Greek energy, the totality of human activity, physical, mental, and spiritual, of Greek men from every land where their traditions ruled, their duties were revered, their customs cherished, and their delightful tongue spoken. They were a social and intellectual symposium, held under a sacred truce, during which the states, ceasing from war, cultivated friendship.

Their competitive spirit penetrated and energized every constructive element of Greek life. Above all the games were religious festivals; in the fields where they took place were built the temples of the gods; and sacrifice, prayer, and choral



hymn were the back-ground against which they were set. In them was witnessed not only 'striving of swift feet and of strong bodies brave to labor'; there was heard also 'the glorious hymn that entereth into the minds of the skilled in song.' In their games, as in all their life, the Greeks aimed at balance and harmony, the beauty of the spirit reflected in the beauty of the flesh, recognizing, as Plato put it, that 'the same great pattern enters into both.'

Is Opportunity for Sportsmanship

"Today, in the same lofty and reverent spirit that characterized the athletic festivals of ancient Hellas, we invoke the divine blessing on this, the Xth Olympiad, and on the youth of many nations who are soon to test in the utmost fire of competition the mettle of their skill and speed and stamina and to show forth to the world under the stress of victory or defeat the quality of their sportsmanship.

"Here in California we are favored with many of the physical characteristics of the lovely land in which these games had their origin. Our seasons are not four but two, a dry season and a wet season. With the changes of season our hills and valleys mark the death and re-birth of vegetation as they do in Greece. In both lands they suggest the hope of immortality. Our sea is the Pacific, not the Aegean, but we believe it is just as blue. Although our valleys sink deeper than those of Greece and our mountains rise higher, our vegetation ranges, as in Greece, from the date palm to the dwarf pines of high altitudes. Greece was open to the east so that she could draw upon the treasures of Asia. What she found she recreated into a civilization which still profoundly influences

all the world. We too are neighbours of Asia and have similar opportunities to give, to take, and to recreate. May the use we make of the days that are immediately before us prove that we are not wholly unworthy of our environment and our opportunities.

Hopes that Games Will Help World

"May these games upon which we are about to embark, like their ancient pattern, help the life of men to higher physical, spiritual, and moral values; may they teach youth character and rugged purpose, courage and self-sacrifice; may they build themselves into the richest and warmest blood of the generation and find their fruitage in the young life of all the days to come. May they promote the love of play, the reciprocity of good will, the solvent of sportsmanship in which shall be washed away the immemorial feuds of mankind that now obscure the realizable ideal of 'Peace on earth, good will toward men.'

"With one heart and one voice we who are here assembled, spectators and competitors alike, dedicate these games to the high purposes in which the original Olympiad was conceived and to which it ideally ministered—to clean sport and fair play, to the development of sound minds in sound bodies, to the loyalties of the team leading to the loyalties of life, to respect for opponents, win or lose, to the brotherhood of mankind. We ask for the Xth Olympiad, conceived in this spirit, the blessing of the Most High as an instrument in his awful hand for the peace of the world, for the good will of peoples, for the building of his kingdom upon the earth."

