



One year before the Games of the XX1st Olympiad

by *H.E. Roger Rousseau*
*President of the Organising Committee
and Commissioner General of the Games
of the XX1st Olympiad*



Olympism is a world without frontiers, a world where the athlete should be able to prove himself in his particular sport, fulfil himself. Every four years, at the end and the beginning of an Olympiad, the athletes leave the different points of the globe to meet up at the crossroads of brotherhood and harmony. This relay, from one Olympiad to the next, from one generation to the next, ensures the continuity of the Olympic movement.

The awe-inspiring universe which the inauguration of the Olympic Games opens up to us should be supported by the whole world.

It is increasingly clear that the organisers of the Olympic Games follow a completely different line of action from one Olympiad to the next, without however infringing the rules and regulations of the International Olympic Committee nor evading the demands of the International Sports Federations.

Together with the IOC, the NOCs and the Sports Federations, the organisers of the Olympic Games must also, during their brief existence, remain the custodians of the covenant binding the Olympic world to Baron Pierre de Coubertin. Compared to the inauguration, the preparation of the Olympic Games is the hidden part of the iceberg. From their successive experience the organisers of the Games are of course the first to ascertain the scope of the undertaking.

Economic and social factors have a direct influence on the preparation of the Olympic Games. We are well

acquainted with them, and other Organising Committees before us, if not all, have had to grapple with that delightful monster, the unforeseen.

In marking out the progressive ramifications of our programmes, we have seen obstacles arise one by one which nobody even imagined could exist. However acute these difficulties may be, however strong their influence, it is to their credit however that they instigate new research, oblige the organisers to revise their initial plans and thus set the whole undertaking back on the course again, the finishing post of which is the universal rendez-vous in the Stadium.

The Games of the XX1st Olympiad will be held in Montreal, Canada, on 17th July 1976, in about one year's time.

Scarcely twelve months away from the great day we can solemnly state that the major concern of the Organising Committee of the 1976 Olympic Games (COJO) has been, and will remain, to give the world the best overall impression of Olympism. Since 1970, the year in which Montreal obtained the 1976 Games, we have spared no effort to inform our countrymen about the significance of this event and to convince them too of the important participating role of the whole nation, of all the enterprises already convinced of the inestimable value of the Olympic movement, of which the contribution to the history of today is reassuring in this period of sometimes excessive complications.

Our different financing programmes constitute an amazing contribution to



the preparation of the 1976 Olympic Games on two levels—human and financial. These programmes are perfectly in line with the reality of the emerging era of participation. They allow companies and social and recreational associations to involve themselves completely on the Olympic field instead of considering it an object of curiosity worth a casual visit, perhaps, once the groundwork has been prepared.

Our appeal for participation has met with remarkable success; we have mentioned the pleasing results in various information bulletins circulated throughout the world.

As for the Olympic installations, COJO will respect the limits it has set in consultation with the IOC and the International Sports Federations.

Canada is a difficult country, an immense and varied country with a harsh climate, but Canadians have built it. With wonderful determination they created and shaped the world fair in 1967, now called Man and his World. Men of the same stamp are involved with almost sentimental devotion in the Olympic constructions, which are lasting proof of their talents and their energy for work.

We shall pass over all the replies to the questions that the world is entitled to ask us and will give just one, brief yet significant: "Yes, everything will be ready on 17th July 1976."

The selection of COJO's personnel was not left to chance. We formed a team which soon settled down in harmony despite the diversity of their previous experience. This experience constituted a guarantee for the COJO authorities which consequently enabled them to avoid the risks of crossing the fathomless depths of transition. All these experts, the top and middle manage-

ment, have succeeded with very little difficulty in overcoming the stumbling blocks involved in the initial constitution of the very complex mechanism of an Organising Committee for the Olympic Games.

To start with the fragile connections between the units of our enterprise gave us somewhat heterogeneous structures which had to be welded together to form a vital force geared to the Olympic objective. There was a time when problems used to mount up. They needed answers. We found them, and revealed them to the public. Concrete answers, which were able to satisfy and clear up certain anxieties. Other problems still remain for which we are seeking solutions.

We will reach our goal, of that there is no doubt. But to get there we have had to go through the inevitable soul-searching crises which were all the more acute because they struck with such intensity.

Today all that is past. We know now that the Olympic Games do not organise themselves with the wave of a magic wand.

From the trials we have overcome one hope has survived—the strength of man's willpower.

In our troubled world, if the four years of effort that preparation for the Games requires are worth being experienced by individuals, they are of special value due to their contribution to the Olympic movement, the perpetuity of which must be guaranteed at all costs.

We hope that the world will have proof of this on 17th July 1976, in the Olympic stadium, in this Canadian metropolis.

R. R.

