

# NOTHING IN HAND, BUT BILLIONS IN PRECEDENT WILFRID KENT HUGHES AND THE MELBOURNE OLYMPIC GAMES TELEVISION STALEMATE



by Robert K. Barney and Stephen R. Wenn



Wilfrid Kent  
Hughes

In the first half century of the Olympic Games, successive Presidents of the *International Olympic Committee*, and the civic officials who organized Olympic festivals, welcomed the print, radio, and eventually, television media to the Olympic precinct. This "open arms" approach, Olympic leaders reasoned, might promote Olympism to the far corners of the world. Utilization of media opportunities offered Olympic fathers a needed method of purveying Olympic philosophy analogous to the role served by a missionary who disseminates his religious creed's message to the world's unenlightened. The media, beyond any other single factor, Olympic fathers decided, would be the great Olympic missionary.

Access, in fact invited and accommodated provision, was granted to all media forms at Olympic sites, carte blanche. This state of affairs lasted until the fledgling television industry targeted sporting events for entertainment programming. Shortly after the conclusion of World War II, the value of television rights purchased for sports programming soared as more and more television sets found their way into American homes.<sup>1</sup> For instance, by the end of the 1940s *Major League Baseball* reaped the benefits of an annual \$800,000 contract; in 1950 it peddled five-

year rights to the World Series for \$6 million.<sup>2</sup> *Notre Dame* received \$100,000 in exchange for television rights to its 1949 home football season. The following year, the *University of Pennsylvania*, an institution with far less national prominence in football than *Notre Dame*, sold the rights to its home football schedule for \$75,000. It was not long in the early history of sport television that the Olympic Games became a focus of attention for some of the industry's moguls. By the early 1950s the entertainment value of the Olympic Games represented a worthy enterprise to business firms for an associated advertising and selling market of commercial goods and services.

By the middle 1950s, rights fees paid by television networks in exchange for exclusive privilege to air specific sporting events was a phenomenon of established fact in the United States. In turn, networks profited both financially and in enhanced visibility and prestige. The larger the viewership, and thus exposure to more prospective consumers, the higher the rights fees demanded by sporting authorities. As well, the same principle applied to the price of advertising charged by the networks to their commercial sponsors.

Most important trends in history commence with a precedent. Such is the case with regard to the Modern Olympic Games and television rights fees. In the case of the Olympics it was an innocent radio incident that established the precedent of granting electronic media the right to broadcast coverage of the Olympic Games, but only under specific provisions and conditions. In time, "specific provisions and conditions" meant the collection of rights fees. In 1932 Los Angeles hosted the Games of the 10<sup>th</sup> Olympiad. Both NBC (*National Broadcasting Company*) and CBS (*Columbia Broadcasting System*) expressed a desire to broadcast accounts of several Olympic events. The *Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games*, fearing impact on ticket sales, a revenue dimension on which it greatly depended for helping to shore up a financially-strapped budget, refused to allow live radio broadcasts from the sporting venues. In the end,

1 For instance, between 1947 and 1950 television rights to the World Series increased tenfold, reaching a rights fee figure of \$800,000 in 1949. For a short discussion of these types of events and the awareness of Olympic officials to them, see BARNEY, Robert K./WENN, Stephen R./MARTYN, Scott G., *Selling the Five Rings: The International Olympic Committee and the Rise of Olympic Commercialism*, Salt Lake City 2002, pp. 57-60.

2 See RADER, Benjamin G., *In Its Own Image: How Television Has Transformed Sports*, New York 1984, pp. 18-19.

the Organizing Committee permitted both NBC and CBS to provide limited Olympic coverage in the form of late evening news summaries only.<sup>3</sup> And, indeed, at this point a principle was established: Olympic coverage as **news** versus Olympic coverage as **entertainment**; in other words, scant coverage in the form of news-briefs versus more than simply fleeting coverage in the form of extended programming.<sup>4</sup> This principle was to have lasting effect.

This essay explores the establishment of this precedent by Wilfrid Kent HUGHES, President of the Melbourne Olympic Games Organizing Committee. Despite significant pressure from domestic and international media, and his own Federal government to permit television access to the Games without consideration of remuneration, Kent HUGHES held firm. The IOC, and the wider Olympic Movement, soon reaped the benefits of Kent HUGHES'S vision that television revenue served as a viable source of money for an Organizing Committee awarded the expensive mandate of staging an Olympic festival.

In the embryonic days of Olympic television, the rights fee principle realized a problematic history. Some eight months prior to the Melbourne Games, Cortina D'Ampezzo organized the 1956 Olympic Winter Games in the Italian alps. *Radio Audizioni Italia* (RAI) and the Organizing Committee entered into an agreement that gave RAI exclusive rights to televise national and international coverage of the Games in return for establishing all technical facilities needed for its own broadcast activities and those of foreign



companies. In an era well before satellite television became reality, "international coverage" meant that live transmission of events from Cortina extended only to eight Western European countries. As well, the Organizing Committee made a modest cash contribution to RAI's financial investment.<sup>5</sup> At this point the payment for rights fees appeared the reverse of what was intended by the principle, that is, in the case of the Cortina D'Ampezzo Games, the Organizing Committee, instead of receiving revenue for the right to air the Games, instead contributed a fee for the network to broadcast them.

The first challenge to the principle of Olympic coverage as "news" vs. "entertainment" occurred initially with respect to the 1956 Games celebrated in Melbourne, Australia. The challenge exerted by both international and Australian film and television companies concerned both live and delayed (film) television broadcasts. Television technology at the time limited the distance that the broadcast image might be projected.<sup>6</sup> Before the advent of satellite television, television signals could not span oceans and continents. Nevertheless, by the 1950s the Olympic Games had become a sporting extravaganza reported in the

3 See BARNEY, Robert Knight, "Resistance, Persistence, Providence: The 1932 Olympic Games in Perspective," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 67(June 1996)2, p. 59 note 44.

4 Though rights sold by Olympic authorities for radio coverage over the years have been engulfed by television rights sales, nevertheless, from 1960, the beginning of application of Rule 49 for rights fees, through 2008, the year that the present IOC-generated rights contracts expire, radio rights have amounted to \$836, 240. This figure is broken down to embrace the following: CBC in Canada paid U.S. \$37,760 and \$60,000 for radio rights to the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary and the 1992 Games in Albertville, respectively; ABC in the U.S.A. paid U.S. \$500,000 and Bermuda paid \$100,000 for the radio rights to the Los Angeles Games in 1984; Papua-New Guinea paid U.S. \$18,480 for the radio rights to the Seoul Summer Games in 1988; and the Australian Broadcasting Company paid U.S. \$120,000 for the radio rights to the Barcelona Summer Games in 1992. See Personal Computer Files of Richard W. Pound, IOC TV Data Files (Winter and Summer), Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

5 The Western European countries were: Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and West Germany. Two sources differ on the amount paid to RAI by the Organizing Committee for the construction of broadcast facilities. *The Official Report of the Games, VII Olympic Winter Games, Cortina D' Ampezzo: Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano, 1956*, p. 421, cited a payment of 10,000,000 lire (\$16,000 U.S. at the time). An IOC source "Procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission Exécutive," Cortina D' Ampezzo, 23 January 1956, p. 1. cites a much larger figure, the equivalent of \$64,000 U.S.

world press. Obviously, the television industry realized the appeal that broadcasting the Games would have to a network's viewing constituency, to say nothing of the exposure element involved, exposure being the chief attraction for an American television company's cost underwriters-advertisers of goods and services. The individual responsible for meeting the challenge was Melbourne's Organizing Committee president, Wilfrid Kent HUGHES, athlete, Rhodes Scholar, war hero, government minister, and resolute protector of the importance of precedent. A brief summary of his background is appropriate at this time.

Wilfrid Kent HUGHES, generally called Billy by family and friends, was born in Melbourne on June 12, 1895. By high school he developed into a capable athlete, mainly in track and field, as well as a meritorious student. In 1914, at age 19, just short of graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Anzac Forces engaged in World War I. Before departing Australia he received word that he had won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. Putting Oxford on hold, he shipped to the Middle East where he served in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria; as well, he took part in the ill-fated Gallipoli landing. At Gallipoli, HUGHES was among the thousands of Australian wounded. At the conclusion of hostilities, he went directly to England to exercise his Rhodes scholarship. Active in athletics at Oxford, he became a celebrated hurdler and quarter-miler, taking part in Antwerp's 1920 Olympic Games in the high hurdles and 400 meter run as a member of the Australian team. His best effort was a 4th place finish in the semi-finals of the 400 meters. Returning to Australia he entered politics and won election to Federal Parliament in 1927 on the Progressive Nationalist ticket. With the Japanese onslaught into Southeast Asia in 1941, Kent HUGHES once again joined the Australian forces and embarked for the defense of Singapore. After an ill-fated campaign against the Japanese in Singapore and the Malaysian Peninsula, the result of which was Allied capitulation on February 17, 1942, Kent HUGHES was taken prisoner, subsequently surviving 3½ years of debilitating internment in POW camps located in Singapore, Formosa, and Manchuria. It was during his internment in Manchuria that he and the diminished numbers of his unit were liberated by

Russian troops in August 1945. Returning to civilian life and politics, a distinguished record in two World Wars, together with parliamentary service and proven administrative leadership, won him the approval of Prime Minister Robert MENZIES and an appointment in May 1951 to the Australian cabinet as Minister of the Interior.<sup>7</sup>

Immediately prior to London's 1948 Olympic Games, Melbourne, a city in which Kent HUGHES had long been active in amateur sport, applied to host the 1956 Olympic Games. Kent HUGHES was a vigorous supporter of Melbourne's candidature and an early worker in the great festival's organizational plans. At the 43rd General Session of the IOC held in Rome in late April 1949, Melbourne was awarded the Games of the 16th Olympiad by one vote in the fifth and final round of voting.<sup>8</sup> Buenos Aires finished as the runner-up. Shortly after assuming his ministerial duties in May 1951, Kent HUGHES accepted what he considered "a part time job," the post of President of the *Melbourne Olympic Games Organizing Committee*.<sup>9</sup> There was much to do, and Kent HUGHES launched himself into the grand project with abandon, securing government money to help with facilities and infrastructure, ironing out disputes between Olympic officials and Melbourne municipal representatives, and a plethora of other Olympic organizing details.

One of the most critical crossroads in the entire history of the Modern Olympic Games intruded into the final stages of planning for the Games. The controversy focused on film and television access to cover the Games for absolutely no charge. Television network officials argued that free access had always been extended to members of the print journalism and still-photography family. Unlike their Cortina D'Ampezzo counterparts, Kent HUGHES and his Organizing Committee colleagues pursued an entirely different approach when it came to film and television matters: demand for remuneration in return for the right to televise the Summer Games competitions. Television executives argued that their medium should be granted rights of coverage identical to print and photography media. Australian government authorities believed that television coverage should be granted gratis because of the advertising that Australia would naturally accrue, advertising that almost certainly would translate into tourist dollars, trade contracts,

6 For instance, the *British Broadcasting Company's* television signal for televising the 1948 Olympic Games from London barely reached the Channel Islands some 150 miles away. Indeed, the broadcast of the London Games was seen in the sharpest and clearest fashion by some 80,000 London and vicinity television set owners. See *The Official Report of the Organizing Committee for the XIVth Olympiad*, (London: Organizing Committee for the XIVth Olympiad, 1948), pp. 121-122.

7 For extended biographical treatment of Wilfrid Kent, HUGHES, see HOWARD, Frederick, *Kent Hughes: A Biography*, Melbourne 1972.

and foreign investment. Despite all, Kent HUGHES and his colleagues remained resolute. Their stand against free and unrestrained filming and live telecasts of the Games was prompted by real fears. For instance, what impact on event ticket sales might occur if people stayed away from the Games to watch the spectacle on television sets instead? And, what might widely viewed television coverage of the Games, even if viewed outside Australia in delayed fashion, have on the economic viability of the Committee's official Olympic film targeted for commercial distribution following the festival? This planned revenue, in the form of ticket sales and film subscriptions, was meant to offset some of the expensive considerations of hosting an Olympic Games.<sup>10</sup> And finally, did not the financial foundation for television network programming rest on the same principle as that of news-papers and radio, the sale of advertising? Would not the Games be "used" for financial profit by the networks and business-commercial interests without an iota of financial return to the Organizing Committee?

Still another consideration influenced Kent HUGHES and his committee. Although most Olympic Games building projects over the years depended



on injection of public tax monies, the Australian national government's contribution to the grand Olympic project was contingent on Melbourne officials agreeing to provide the Melbourne Cricket Club grounds as the main Olympic venue; Federal dollars would be granted to support other necessary facilities and infrastructure. A pet Kent Hughes idea, however, remained a plan to translate the government's contribution towards building a new Olympic stadium, one that would

serve as the main venue of the Games and, afterwards, as a home for amateur athletics (track and field) in the State of Victoria. Australia's federal authorities would have none of this. The MCG would have to suffice. But, it remained in Kent HUGHES'S mind that if such an amateur sport facility pertinent to his vision could not be built for the Games, then the vision could be realized when the Olympic flame was extinguished. Revenue from television rights fees would pay the bill. Kent HUGHES thought that a \$500,000 U.S. bonanza might accrue from such fees.<sup>11</sup>

Compared to Europe and North America, television experienced a tardy arrival in Australia. In fact, conventional wisdom still solidly in place, advances the idea that the introduction of television in "the Land Down Under" was planned

8 *The IOC Sessions, 1894 – 1955*, Volume I (compiled and edited by Wolf Lyberg), Lausanne, IOC, nd., p 256.

9 Kent HUGHES performed both his cabinet duties and his Organization Committee presidential work until January 1956, at which time MENZIES, in restructuring his cabinet, fired Kent HUGHES, claiming that his (Kent HUGHES') administration "had not been very efficient." For a brief account of the final MENZIES-Kent HUGHES confrontation on this matter, see HOWARD, *Hughes*, pp. 177-184.

10 Film rights translated into filming Olympic events in Melbourne, having the film flown to North America and Europe for showing on a delayed basis as special "short subject" material in movie theaters, and as abbreviated programs on television.

11 Kent HUGHES'S TV rights revenue projection figure of \$500,000 U.S. may have evolved from a statement attributed to Avery BRUNDAGE made to George MOIR, an Organizing Committee colleague of Kent HUGHES's, during BRUNDAGE'S visit to Australia in late 1955. See MOIR to Kent HUGHES, 3 January 1956, *Moir Collection, Australian Gallery of Sport and Olympic Museum*, Melbourne, Australia, as cited by CAHILL, Shane, "A Very Hard Crowd to Have Dealings With: International and Australian Television Networks' Resistance to the Demands of the 1956 Melbourne Olympics Organizing Committee for a Fee for Television Coverage, 1955-1956," in: *On-line Proceedings: Forty Years of Television Conference* (Published by the National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University), 1996, p. 17., available on the internet from <http://www.arts.edu.au/ncas/resources/40years/Chanill.shtml>. In effect, BRUNDAGE most likely arrived at the \$500,000 figure as a result of the City of Detroit's bid for the 1956 Games, in which it was proclaimed that if awarded the Games the Organizing Committee would underwrite the travel costs of all participating athletes, those expenditures to be gleaned from television rights fees estimated to be worth "\$500,000 ... in the rapidly growing North American market" (CAHILL, "Crowd", p. 5). On the other hand, the idea of \$500,000 may have been derived by Lewis Luxton's (Executive Committee member of the Melbourne Organizing Committee) preliminary agreement in October 1955 with Associated Rediffusion (AR), a newly licensed English commercial channel, which aimed at realizing two goals: (1) a payment by AR of 25,000 Pounds Sterling for exclusive Olympic broadcasting rights in Britain, and (2) an agreement whereby AR would pursue negotiation with U.S. sources for the sale of Olympic television rights in America using \$500,000 U.S. as a base figure (CAHILL, "Crowd", p. 5). AR's negotiations in the United States on behalf of the Melbourne Organizing Committee were aimed at enlisting Westinghouse, one of the leading

to coincide with the staging of the Olympic Games in Melbourne in the late fall of 1956.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Shane Cahill argues that the two phenomena, the introduction of television to Australia and the occurrence of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, converged on two separate linear axes. The introduction of television in Australia was planned for a period well in advance of Melbourne securing the distinction of host to the Games. But its implementation in the country was long delayed due to cultural fears, economic constraints and defense priorities, and, as well, political machinations aimed at preserving the status of already entrenched competing media sources (print publishing and radio).<sup>13</sup> These two differing points of view aside, there is little doubt that television's ultimate debut in Australia became, in time, infinitely linked to the celebration of the Melbourne Olympic Games, perhaps more by happenstance than by design.

Wilfrid Kent HUGHES and his Melbourne Organizing Committee associates were adamant that television networks worldwide be granted rights to broadcast film of the Games for network programming only if they paid for that right. And, what exactly was Olympic **news**? In Kent HUGHES's eyes, **news** could not exceed three one-minute segments of Olympic coverage per each day's broadcast programming, for which Kent HUGHES and his committee were willing to grant on a royalty free basis. No fees would be required. But, what might be considered Olympic **entertainment**? In Kent HUGHES'S view, **enter-**

**tainment** was described as any time span greater than three one-minute segments. The inter-national networks spurned Melbourne's free one-minute segment offer, demanding instead, no less than three three-minute segments for a total of nine minutes daily. Kent HUGHES and his colleagues rejected this position. Borrowing from a well-defined axiom with regard to what was already apparent in American television, an axiom embodying payment for rights to televise sporting contests, Kent HUGHES argued that "*sporting and athletic groups which stage contests with a wide appeal to spectators are entitled to expect fees for the TV. and film rights.*"<sup>14</sup> Rebuffed by Kent HUGHES's denial of the request for nine minutes of free newsreel Olympic Games coverage per day, overseas controllers of film and television rebuffed further discussion, announcing angrily that filming of athletics was not **entertainment** but rather **news** reporting, and thus traditionally free for all media. An angry and consolidated media coalition subsequently implemented an almost universal boycott of Melbourne Olympic Games coverage outside Australia.<sup>15</sup>

After the Melbourne Games, Kent HUGHES's reflection on the matter is instructive:

*"Sport is probably T. V.'s greatest asset and they want to get it free. The issue is not 3 or 9 minutes of free film . . . the fight in the future will be for as much film as they like to decide is news."*<sup>16</sup>

Instructive, too, is the insight of Paul TALBOT, an independent New York-based media broker with considerable Australian experience (he was an Australian by birth and citizenship). He served as

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television sponsors in the entire American television industry, a firm specializing particularly in "one off" spectacles. The quest for a Westinghouse alliance collapsed almost immediately due to the fact that the huge electrical conglomerate was a major share-holder of the *National Broadcasting Company* (NBC), a network that Kent HUGHES and his colleagues had already alienated by their resolute "pay for rights" dictum, something that NBC could not accept.

12 A plethora of literary pieces support such "conventional wisdom." For short treatments, see, for instance, McCULLOCH, Susan, "Exhibition revisits Games-struck 50s," in: *The Weekend Australian*, 14-15 December 1996; PLANT, Simon, "1956, The Year our Voice Broke," in: *The Australian Magazine*, 7-8 December 1996; and HAZELHURST, Cameron, "The Advent of Commercial Television," in: *Australian Cultural History*, No. 2, 1982-1983. See also, for instance, STODDART, Brian, *Saturday Afternoon Fever: Sport in Australian Culture*, North Ryde, NSW 1986, p. 99; GOLDLUST, John, *Playing for Keeps: Sport, Media and Society* Melbourne 1987, p. 81; CURTHOYS, Ann, "The Getting of Television: Dilemmas in Ownership, Control and Culture," in: CURTHOYS, Ann/MERRITT, John (eds.), *Better Dead Than Red: Australia's First Cold War, 1949-1956*, Vol. 2, Sydney, 1986, p. '151-note 92, and p. 205.

13 See CAHILL, Shane, *The Friendly Games? The Melbourne Olympic Games in Australian Culture, 1946-1956*, Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Melbourne, Melbourne 1990.

14 Cited by HOWARD, *Hughes* p. 187.

15 The chief areas of the world with television capability by 1956 were North America and Europe, thus B.B.C. in Britain, Eurovision on the continent, the *Canadian Broadcasting Company*, and all major outlets in the United States were party to the boycott. The Melbourne Organizing Committee, however, eventually established its own film unit, providing 1,000 feet of film daily; this was subsequently drawn on by independently-owned movie theaters in Australia and a few minor television stations in America. The international television/theater newsreel boycott, though extensive, was not complete.

16 See *Melbourne Herald and Weekly Times*, 10 May 1957. Emphasis ours.

the chief negotiator for Kent HUGHES and his committee on the subject of American film and television rights to the Melbourne Games. Opined TALBOT after the failure of negotiations for international rights:

*"It was not the 3 minutes in each of the 3 daily broadcasts to which we objected, but, rather, to the fact that the networks insisted that each of the 3 minute segments would be different and that they could then combine them for a total of 9 minutes, which with their wrap-around and commercials, would make a daily sponsorship program. At that time, 15 minute programs, including the national news, were common on network TV."<sup>17</sup>*

Censure of Kent HUGHES was not limited solely to angry international media firms. An avalanche of criticism descended on him from Australian government officials and media representatives. He was roundly scored for sacrificing world-wide publicity for Australia in a short-sighted attempt to squeeze revenue from the media. In Australia, where the birth of television happened to coincide with the opening of the Games, John WILLIAMS, managing director of the *Herald and Weekly Times*, Melbourne's major newspaper (owned by Keith MURDOCH, father of present day media industry mogul Rupert MURDOCH) argued that if the Games could not be seen on all Australian television networks, indeed networks the world over, then Kent HUGHES had ill-served his fellow citizens. *"If you sell exclusive rights . . . I shall have to write you down in the paper"* WILLIAMS threatened in a telephone conversation with Kent HUGHES some 11 months prior to the Games.<sup>18</sup>

If confrontation and bluster had in the end generally removed Melbourne's Games from international viewing, a greater degree of sanity prevailed between local parties with respect to televising the Games in Australia. On the eve of the Games, it was estimated that at best there might be 5,000 television sets in the Melbourne area. Under great pressure from Melbourne television stations, Kent HUGHES and his Committee made a last minute decision with regard to televising the Games locally. Television would be granted free access to events only in venues that were "sold out." Many venues were completely

sold out; thus, Melbourne folks saw a great deal of the 1956 Olympic games on live television. As the Games progressed, sales of television sets rose dramatically. In an era when Melbourne television capability could hardly penetrate beyond the city's immediate environs, viewers in Sydney had to be satisfied with viewing Australia's first Olympic Games in delayed fashion by dint of film flown overnight from Melbourne. In a last minute agreement, Kent HUGHES and his colleagues attempted to recoup at least some financial consideration from commercial forces for the rights to the Games. In this they were only modestly successful. Channel 9 paid 1,000 Australian pounds to the Organizing Committee, then charged 9,000 pounds from Ampol, the Australian oil firm, for an advertising link with the Games' television broadcasts. *Ampol's* sales manager was circumspect: *"In the end I suppose we got it for peanuts..."*

As a postscript, television and film rights were not the only problem for Kent Hughes. A most vexing dilemma was how to handle the pugnacious Avery BRUNDAGE, elected IOC president in 1952. By 1954 the state of preparations for the Games planned in November 1956 "was not impressive." Kent HUGHES explained to BRUNDAGE on the IOC President's visit to Melbourne some eighteen months before the Games opened, that Australia's seemingly "casual gait" should be measured against the typical Australian trait of a slow start and a fast finishing sprint when the final challenge came into focus. The relationship between Kent HUGHES and BRUNDAGE was never good; BRUNDAGE remained critical of the Australian, indeed condemning the seriousness of his approach to the organization task; Kent HUGHES retaliated, charging that an already difficult task was not made any easier when *"Chicago blow-ins come out here and blow their tops over nothing in particular and annoy everyone in general"*<sup>19</sup> Well before Kent HUGHES and the Melbourne Games, however, there were many folks in the sporting world who were familiar with the difficult interpersonal relationships character of the crusty IOC head. As well, on occasion Kent HUGHES himself could be equally obstinate.

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17 CAHILL, "Crowd", p. 9.

18 This quotation by WILLIAMS is cited by HOWARD, *Hughes*, p. 188, and by CAHILL, "Crowd", p. 4.

19 See HOWARD, *Hughes*, p. 176. Kent HUGHES'S angry aside on BRUNDAGE was communicated by him to John T MCGOVERN, an old friend from his days at Oxford. MCGOVERN, an esteemed New York lawyer who was a longtime USOC Executive Committee member, could not have been surprised by Kent HUGHES'S remarks. MCGOVERN himself had been embroiled in circumstances on more than one occasion when his own gentlemanly, non-confrontational approach was taxed to the limit in repairing damage done by BRUNDAGE'S often acerbic nature with regard to resolving Olympic issues, the most celebrated case of which was MCGOVERN'S leadership in resolving the now famous *Helms Bakeries* Olympic insignia protection case. See, for instance, BARNEY et al., *Rings*, pp. 31-50.

Avery BRUNDAGE stayed at arm's length from the saga of Australian and international television rights for the 1956 Games, but he observed closely all that unfolded.<sup>20</sup> Grasping the Kent HUGHES principle that fees must be paid for the television rights to broadcast the Olympic Games, BRUNDAGE and IOC colleagues crafted a television rights fees policy following the Melbourne Games (Rule 49). Basically, Rule 49 commanded that future Organizing Committees negotiate such rights with television networks subject to the IOC's final approval. Rule 49 enunciated the principle that three three-minute news broadcast segments per day was a maximum amount for which no fees would be charged. More than that commanded a negotiated rights fee. For the Squaw Valley Olympic Winter Games in California in 1960, for instance, CBS bought the American rights for \$50,000. With respect to the Games in Italy some 5 months later, the Rome Organizing Committee sold the European rights to the European Broadcasting Union for \$667,967 U.S. Eighteen countries saw the Games on live television. The Rome Games were also televised on a delayed basis in the United States, Canada, and Japan. Rome sold the American rights to CBS for \$394,940. These landmark rights fees payments forever changed the way the public watched the Olympics.

Paul TALBOT, Melbourne's New York representative in the failed talks that resulted in an Olympic Games television boycott by American networks over the subject of rights fees, wrote to Kent HUGHES in July 1960, offering an opinion of what the precedent of 1956 would mean to the Modern Olympic Movement of the future. Though TALBOT'S

remarks were directed at the Rome experience with regard to television rights fees, there is absolutely no doubt that his prophetic remarks carried far beyond those specific Games, in fact, to the billions of dollars that would be earned from television rights of the future. Wrote TALBOT:

*"There is no question but that if you had submitted to the very considerable pressure placed upon you in 1956 to allow the Games to be covered with no reimbursement to the Australia Committee, the Italian Committee would not now be enjoying financial support from television."*<sup>22</sup>

When discussion turns to individuals who contributed significantly to the IOC's marriage with television and the financial bonanza underwritten by the union, names such as Avery BRUNDAGE, Juan Antonio SAMARANCH, Monique BERLIOUX, Roone ARLEDGE, Richard POUND and Dick EBERSOL are most often mentioned. Kent HUGHES deserves a place on that list. In the end, though he could count almost "nothing in hand" from attempts to sell Melbourne television rights, Kent HUGHES established a precedent that translated into a literal "golden goose," indeed, one that laid eggs of Olympian dimension. And, just what might be the cumulative figure for the production of world television rights revenue over a period of what is now just about a half century (1960-2012)? Slightly in excess of \$12 billion!<sup>23</sup> Ah yes, a tidy sum. Indeed, as one of the most important figures in Olympic history, the IOC should consider commissioning an oil portrait of Wilfrid "Billy" Kent HUGHES (how about a duplicate of the one pictured below?) and mount it in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne beside one of Pierre de COUBERTIN standing in front of yet another imposing steed?"



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20 See WENN, Stephen R., "Lights! Camera! Little Action: Avery Brundage and the 1956 Melbourne Olympics," *Journal of the Australian Society for Sport History*, 10(November 1993)1.

21 For more on this, see BARNEY et al., *Rings*, pp. 74-76.

22 Paul TALBOT to Wilfrid Kent HUGHES, 20 July 1960. As cited by HOWARD, *Hughes*, p. 247, note #3.

23 A figure of \$10,067,119,024 is the total figure reached after computing world television rights sales for both Winter and Summer Games from the Squaw Valley and Rome Games in 1960 to the Beijing Games scheduled (but already sold) for 2008. This figure, for the most part, reflects rights fees totals generated by Richard POUND, former chairman of the IOC's Television Committee and New Sources of Finance Commission. See Personal Computer Files of Richard W. POUND, IOC TV Data Files (Winter and Summer), Montreal, Quebec, Canada. To the figure noted above, of course, must be added the \$2.1 billion paid by NBC for the rights to the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games and the 2012 Summer Games, the host city of which will not be determined until 2005.