

REPORT

to the International Olympic Committee by the Organising Committee

FOR THE XVIth OLYMPIAD, MELBOURNE, 1956

GENERAL

In this progress report on planning for the *XVIth Olympiad, Melbourne, 1956*, we wish to indicate to the International Olympic Committee that preparations have been advanced so far as to make us confident that Melbourne will prove a worthy host city to the greatest of all athletic contests.

At this time, it is not possible to report in exact detail on all provisions which will be made during the next three and a half years for the most satisfactory conduct of the Games. But the outline which follows — detailed where possible and general where necessary — will, we believe, serve to show that Melbourne is keenly aware of the ideals of the Olympic contests, is appreciative of the honour bestowed on her by the International Olympic Committee in choosing the city as the venue for the 1956 Games, and is confidently determined to stage the Olympiad of 1956 in accordance with the highest traditions of the Games.

During last year the Australian Olympic Federation arranged for the registration of a company styled *the organising Committee for the XVIth Olympiad, Melbourne, 1956*. The Company is under the management of an Executive Committee and the chairmanship of the Minister for the Interior in the Commonwealth Government, the Hon. W. S. Kent-Hughes, M.P. The Committee is representative of the Governments of the Commonwealth of Australia, the State of Victoria, the Council of the City of Melbourne and the Australian Olympic Federation.

An administrative body—the Control Committee — was set up by the Executive under the chairmanship of Mr. A. W. Coles (who has resigned in the meantime. *Editor*), with an organising secretary and members representing the Organising Committee, the Governments of the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria, the Melbourne City Council and outside business men.

Three sub-committees which have already been formed are: one dealing with housing and catering (under the chairmanship of Mr. N. Carlyon), one dealing with technical details of the Games (under the chairmanship of Mr. E. J. Holt, Technical Director) and one dealing with the provision of postal, radio and press facilities (under the chairmanship of Mr. M. R. Stradwick, Assistant Director General, Postmaster General's Department). At a later date, additional sub-committees such as Transport, Medical Services, Reception, Public Relations and Publicity, and Arts will be formed.

In 1952 Representatives of the Organising Committee and special sports observers travelled to Helsinki to study all aspects of the XVth Olympiad. On their return to Melbourne, the observers reported in detail on each sport. Technical details for the conduct of the various sports are now being worked out and the Organising Committee has become an active body operating from its new Headquarters centrally located in the heart of the city at 147 Collins Street, Melbourne.

VENUES AND SPORTS

A special feature of the proposed venues of the XVIth Olympiad, Melbourne, 1956, will be the close proximity of the various arenas to the city area.

The Olympic Stadium, the Swimming Pool and five other arenas are within two miles of the heart of the city. Yachting and Rifle and Pistol Shooting will be held in suburbs at a distance of four and ten miles from the city.

With the exception of Rowing, Canoeing and the Equestrian Long Distance event of 36 kilometres over open country, all events will be held within the confines of Melbourne.

It is proposed to adhere to the promotion of the same sports and events as were held at the Helsinki Games in 1952.

OLYMPIC STADIUM

Plans originally made to convert Melbourne's premier sporting arena — the Melbourne Cricket Ground — into an Olympic Stadium can now be realised. Instead of constructing a new Stadium at Carlton as subsequently proposed, it has now been arranged that the Melbourne Cricket Ground will be used as the venue for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Athletics, Equestrian Event (Prix des Nations), Football semi-finals, final and third-fourth match) and Hockey (semi-finals, final and third-fourth match) and Demonstrations.

The Melbourne Cricket Ground is normally used for the finals of Melbourne's first-class football and cricket competitions and for international athletic events.

The Stadium normally holds 85,000 persons and has held a record 95,000 for a football final. The Melbourne Cricket Ground authorities plan to demolish a portion of the existing stands and rebuild them on the most modern lines to increase the holding capacity. The Stadium is completely encircled by two-

storey covered grandstands. It is set in extensive parklands within one mile of the centre of the city.

OLYMPIC SWIMMING AND DIVING POOL

A new enclosed Swimming and Diving Pool will be built in Fawkner Park at a cost of about £350,000. Building is scheduled to begin during the latter half of the current year and to be completed within twelve months.

The Pool is a modern conception with a striking elevation and its sloping sides will rise among the trees of surrounding parklands. The design was chosen from 72 entries in a competition for the best architectural plan and has been acclaimed by experts.

The structure will contain a regulation pool measuring 50 metres by 20 metres and a separate diving pool measuring 20 metres by 27 ½ yards. Overall dimensions of the building will be 60 feet in height, 340 feet in length and 220 feet in width. It will seat over 6,000 spectators.

Other baths in the city and suburbs will be used for some of the water polo contests and for training. Diving contests will take place in the specially constructed diving pool.

EXHIBITION BUILDING

The Exhibition Building, the largest and one of the most historic buildings in Australia, has been chosen as the venue for Gymnastics and the Fencing events.

VELODROME

A new Velodrome, conforming in all respects with Olympic requirements will be built at Melbourne's athletic grounds which flank the Yarra River. It will be a standard Olympic type track of five laps to the mile and will have permanent seating accommodation for 5,000 persons. Cost of the Velodrome will approximate £120,000.

The Velodrome will be situated within a mile of the centre of the city on a triangular area of parkland which is bordered by two broad motor roads.

An excellent eleven mile, paved course, located at Broadmeadows, ten miles from the city, containing some steep and minor grades with two sharp turns, has been chosen as the site for the road race.

LAKE WENDOUREE

Rowing and Canoeing events will be held on Lake Wendouree in the city of Ballarat, 70 miles inland from Melbourne. Canoeing events will be held at the completion of the rowing events.

Lake Wendouree has been chosen because of its wide expanse of fresh, still water at a constant depth of 5 ft. 9 in. along its entire straight 2,000 metres course. The lake's depth

is unaffected by rainfall and the waters are free from tide or stream. The racing course for Olympic events will be 72 metres wide, giving each of six crews 12 metres of racing space.

Lake Wendouree has been acclaimed an outstanding venue for rowing and has been used by the Australian Rowing Council for such class events as Olympic Games test races and British Empire rowing trials.

GLACIARIUM

Melbourne's Glaciarium, situated within a few hundred yards of the centre of the city, will be converted for Basketball contests. The Glaciarium has a floor space of 14,500 square feet. With the agreement of the International Basketball Federation it is proposed to hold eliminating rounds prior to the commencement of the Games so that the number of nations competing during the Games may be reduced to sixteen.

PORT PHILLIP BAY

Yachting events will be held within four miles of the centre of Melbourne on Port Phillip Bay. The course will extend off the foreshore from St. Kilda to Sandringham.

Port Phillip Bay is a virtually land-locked 725 square miles of water free of reefs, tidal streams and currents. Racing conditions vary from smooth to seas of three feet height, winds are true and are not made tricky by headland crags or inlets. These conditions will ensure that visiting and local yachtsmen will meet in fair and equal competition. Twenty-five yacht clubs skirt the bay and most provide land-to-water slipways, laying-up berths, masting derricks, gear lockers and spar and dinghy racks.

TOWN HALL

Melbourne's Town Hall has been chosen as the venue for Weight-Lifting and Wrestling.

The Town Hall is on the corner of Collins and Swanston Streets which is the virtual heart of the city. The Town Hall is well provided with facilities and spectator accommodation.

WEST MELBOURNE STADIUM

Boxing events will be held at Melbourne's main boxing stadium in West Melbourne, about one mile from the centre of the city. The stadium has a seating capacity of 8,000.

WILLIAMSTOWN RANGE

Rifle shooting and Pistol-shooting will be held at Williamstown, 10 miles from the centre of Melbourne. Access to Williamstown,

which is situated on the point jutting into Port Phillip Bay, is by fast electric railway and by road.

Williamstown range has been placed at the disposal of the Organising Committee by the Officer commanding Southern Command, Australian Defence Forces. Admirable facilities are available.

Clay pigeon shooting will take place at Coburg, one of Melbourne's suburbs, at the clay-pigeon range known as the Coburg Gun Club.

OTHER EVENTS

EQUESTRIAN

The Dressage event will be held at the Melbourne Showgrounds in Flemington. The Three Days Event across open country, roads, etc. will be conducted in accordance with the regulations of the International Equestrian Federation.

Certain proposals have been submitted to the Health Authorities, with a view to special quarantine arrangements, under which it will be possible to bring horses into Australia, for the Equestrian events. These proposals are at present being examined, and we are hopeful that suitable arrangements will be evolved.

FOOTBALL AND HOCKEY

As mentioned earlier, semi-final, final and third-fourth match will be held in the Olympic Stadium. Other contests will be held at various club grounds in the suburbs.

It is proposed that all Hockey games should be played during the Games proper. With regard to Football, it is proposed to hold eliminating rounds prior to the commencement of the Games so that the number of nations competing during the Games will be reduced to sixteen. Consultation with the International Football Association will be held on this proposal.

MODERN PENTATHLON

The riding test will be held near Melbourne and the remaining events will be held at the same venues at which the respective sports are being staged.

ART COMPETITIONS

Competitions in the Arts Section will be reinstated and will include architecture, literature, music, painting and sculpture. The exhibits will be displayed in the Melbourne Art Gallery. It is proposed to open the Exhibition to the public on the 19th November, and close it at the termination of the Games.

OLYMPIC FLAME AND TORCH RELAY

Arrangements are being considered for the kindling of the Olympic Flame. It is planned to convey the flame from Olympia to Brisbane and thence by relays of runners via Sydney to the Olympic Stadium.

OPENING

It is proposed to hold the Opening Ceremony during the afternoon of Thursday, 22nd November, 1956. The Games will begin that evening with Boxing and Basketball.

FEATURES AND FACILITIES

Hotel reservations for the members of the International Olympic Committee have already been made, together with the necessary office accommodation.

It is not anticipated that there will be any difficulty in organising accommodation for visitors to Melbourne for the Games. Melbourne has a population of about 1,300,000 people. There are 90 licensed hotels in the city proper and a total of 576 in the city and suburbs, besides innumerable non-licensed hotels and boarding establishments. To the extent to which the capacity of existing hotels and accommodation houses may be strained, it is proposed to organise hospitality in the homes of the people of Melbourne.

COMPETITORS AND OFFICIALS

An Olympic Village to house up to 6,000 competitors and officials will be built by the Victorian State Government with funds advanced interest-free by the Commonwealth Government of Australia. The Commonwealth has agreed to advance a sum of £2,000,000 for this work.

Various sites for the Village have been suggested and ground plans have been drawn up. Typical of the plans for the Village are those for the construction of 600 houses at Heidelberg, one of Melbourne's progressive suburbs, eight miles from the centre of the city of Melbourne.

Plans for the Heidelberg project include provision of a central area of the Village for kitchen and messing facilities which would be within a short walk of the furthestmost living units. The area would also provide community services such as laundry, banking and postal facilities, and shopping.

The site chosen will have adequate transport to the city. Direct transport will be provided from the Village to all sporting venues and training arenas to meet the requirements of competitors and officials.

FILMS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Official films and photographs of all the final competitions will be taken and a copy

of the films will be given to the International Olympic Committee for its Museum. Arrangements will also be made with the International Federations for films or photographs to be taken of each particular sport.

COMMUNICATIONS

BROADCASTING

Interviewing and recording: Facilities will be available for interviewing competitors immediately after the completion of events or at their leisure subsequently. Visiting broadcasters will require to bring their own recorders, either wire or tape, and spare wires and tapes. Power will be available for operation of the recorders (probably 230 volts A.C.).

Editing: Rooms will be set aside in the Olympic Stadium in which broadcasters may edit recorded material before transmission.

Overseas broadcasts: The number of channels, the hours during which broadcasting conditions will be satisfactory and the countries to which transmissions, either direct or indirect will be practicable, have not yet been determined. Time differences between Melbourne and most other parts of the world will limit the number of « live » broadcasts as distinct from recorded material. No difficulties are anticipated in meeting broadcasting requirements.

TELEGRAPH, CABLE AND BEAM WIRELESS FACILITIES FOR THE PRESS

Special attention is being given to the requirements of Press representatives so that messages may be lodged conveniently and quickly for transmission to overseas destinations.

Lodgment offices will be established at the Games venues, the Olympic Village and Press Residential centres.

Adequate channels will be available for the transmission of telegrams, other Press matter and picturegrams to overseas destinations.

FINANCE

In his report at Helsinki last July, Mr. Lewis Luxton reported that adequate finance

to stage the XVIth Olympiad, Melbourne, 1956, had been guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government of Australia, the State Government of Victoria and the Council of the City of Melbourne. These bodies have recently reaffirmed their joint undertaking to the Organising Committee to provide necessary funds for capital expenditure on various stadia, training tracks, etc. to a total of £1,250,000.

On present estimates, capital requirements are of the order of £850,000. This amount will cover work on the Olympic Stadium (the Melbourne Cricket Ground) to bring it into conformity with Olympic standards and the requirements of the International Amateur Athletic Federation. A sum of up to £300,000 will be spent on this work.

It is estimated that £350,000 will be required to build a new permanent Olympic Swimming and Diving Pool while £200,000 will cover the construction of a new Velodrome, training tracks and other minor works. As the three financing authorities have agreed to provide up to £1,250,000, a margin of £400,000 exists over anticipated expenditure for capital works.

The Commonwealth and State Governments have agreed to guarantee finance to the extent of £200,000 for organisational expenditure. To date, the Organising Committee has expended some £19,000 on preliminary work mainly on the cost of the observers at the Helsinki Games, office rental and the Committee's moiety of its subscription to the International Olympic Committee. It has also entered into contracts that at this stage may involve an expenditure of over £50,000.

As mentioned a sum of £2,000,000 is being provided for housing under a Commonwealth-State housing scheme. The houses built under the agreement will be available for the accommodation of up to 6,000 competitors and officials.

1894-1954

It is evident that the best way to pay tribute to a glorious past consists in drawing one's inspiration from its teachings so as to plan the future.

P. de C., Rome 1923.