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The XI Commonwealth Games — "The Friendly Games"

The Commonwealth Games "shall be merrier and less stern, and will substitute the stimulus of a novel adventure for the pressure of international rivalry", was how Canadian M.M. (Bobby) Robinson proposed the event to amateur sports leaders at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam. And so the Commonwealth Games became known as "The Friendly Games", with the emphasis on individual competition — man against man, woman against woman — rather than nation versus nation.

Members of the Commonwealth family, still growing at 48 participating nations and affiliates, will gather in Edmonton, Alberta from August 3 to 12, in the same friendly spirit, just as they did in Hamilton, Ontario (1930); London, England (1934); Sydney, Australia (1938); Auckland, New Zealand (1950); Vancouver, British Columbia (1954); Cardiff, Wales (1958); Perth, Australia (1962); Kingston, Jamaica (1966); Edinburgh, Scotland (1970); and Christchurch, New Zealand (1974).

It is significant that the country where the Commonwealth Games originated also has the opportunity to host their fiftieth anniversary (two years early, since the true date falls in 1980, between the four-year Games' cycle).

The first suggestion for British Empire Games came from J. Ashley Cooper of Yorkshire, England, when he made a proposal in articles in *Greater Britain* and in *The Times* in 1891, that contest in industry, athletics and culture be held to promote "increasing goodwill and good understanding of The Empire". It is interesting to note that, at that time, there were no Olympic Games, since they were not revived until 1896.

While the forerunner of the Commonwealth Games was held at the Crystal Palace grounds in London in 1911, it was not until 1930, two years after Robinson's proposal, when the first British Empire Games were held in Hamilton, Canada, that the Commonwealth Games



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movement had its true beginning. Participation was limited to nations with "membership in good standing" in the Empire, while competition was limited to non-team individual competitions in nine sports.

Record number of participants

The Commonwealth Games Foundation expects a record number of 2,000 competitors and officials at Edmonton. As of May 30, 47 member countries (including affiliates) had accepted invitations to take part; six more are eligible and may still send competitors.

Dr. Maury Van Vliet, Games president, speaking at a press conference in Ottawa, said that by actual count, there were 1,741 athletes and 477 officials — a total of 2,218 — involved in the competitive phase of the Games, to say nothing of those behind the scenes. The largest previous total was 1,744 — 1,383 competitors and 361 officials — at the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.

The costs of the 1978 Games, estimated in 1974 at \$36 million, are being shared by the Federal Government, the province of Alberta, the city of Edmonton, the Edmonton Kinsmen Club and the Commonwealth Games Foundation. Dr. Van Vliet said that all the new facilities had been completed and, with all but

