

BELGIUM

by Thomas Ameye*

The Belgian Olympic Committee was founded one hundred years ago.¹ The immediate cause behind this were the 1906 Olympic Games in Athens.² Clément LEFÉBURE, commander of the military *Ecole normale de Gymnastique et d'Escrime* in Brussels was contacted by the Greek Organising Committee with a request to ensure Belgium participated in these Games.³ LEFÉBURE immediately took the case to heart and called together a foundation meeting on 18 February 1906 in the Brussels Ravenstein Hotel.⁴ Baron Edouard DE LAVELEYE, president of the *Union belge des Sociétés de Sports athlétiques* and Cyrille VAN OVERBERGH, Director-General of Higher Education, Sciences and Arts, were appointed co-presidents of the *Comité belge des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes* at that first meeting. VAN DEN ABEELE, president of the *Cercle d'Escrime de la Société La Concorde* and LEFÉBURE were appointed vice-president and secretary-general respectively. WALCKIERS, secretary of the *Ligue belge de Lawn-tennis*, completed the committee as the treasurer.⁵

Getting prepared for Athens

In those early days there was no mention yet of the "Belgian Olympic Committee", but of the *Comité Belge des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes* (CBJOA; Belgian Committee for the Olympic Games in Athens). Getting a Belgian team to Athens was the committee's objective. In the run-up to the Games there would finally be four preparation meetings: on 18 and 27 February 1906 and on 18 and 26 March 1906. That preparation was not without turmoil. In order for the CBJOA to gain some (financial) clout and credibility the patronage of Prince ALBERT, the honorary presidency of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Public Education, Jules DE TROOZ and the honorary vice-presidency of industrial magnate Ernest SOLVAY was asked and received. Still the Belgian government was not willing to finance a Belgian delegation to the Athens Games. The CBJOA therefore had to cope with the 3,500 Belgian Franks (BF) put available by the Greek Organising Committee for the transport and accommodation of 20 athletes and a donation of BF 500 by Maecenas Ernest SOLVAY. During the last meeting on 26 March 1906 LEFÉBURE also mentions an anonymous donation of BF 1,000 by a "generous Greek amateur" and Fr. EMPAIN, vice-president of the *Brussels Racing Yacht Club*, donated BF 100.⁶

The actual selection of a Belgian delegation took a very long time. During the start-up meeting it was agreed that the sports federations must let their members know themselves that they were looking for delegates. If needed, those federations then had to organise elimination competitions to limit the number of participants and only select the best athletes.⁷ Of the provisional selection of 15 athletes that were presented during the third meeting on 18 March 1906,⁸ only six would be part of the final Belgian team. For instance, four of the six Belgian fencers pulled out: MOUTON was unable to make himself free and Jacques VERREY, Alex SIMONSON and Paul ANSPACH⁹ made it known at the beginning of April that they did not wish to travel to Athens because of the variola epidemic.¹⁰ Indeed, Athens was struck by a short bout of smallpox in the run-up to the Games, but that abated again long before the start of the Games. Belgium would ultimately mobilise a small, fifteen man selection. They comprised five fencers, three cyclists, three athletes, two rowers, a wrestler and a marksman. The financial aid in the amount of BF 5,100 was distributed in such a way among the participants that each one received 400 franks. Because the fencers were by far the largest group, they received only 300 franks per person.¹¹

LEFÉBURE would travel as "delegation leader" and as Belgium's official representative. To this end, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Education granted him a subsidy of BF 1,000.¹² In exchange, LEFÉBURE had to do research on the results of the different methods of gymnastics and sport in Greece and his conclusions towards physical education in Belgium.¹³ Auguste FOSSÉPREZ, Gymnastics inspector for primary and secondary education, would also travel with LEFÉBURE as the official representative of the Belgian government in Athens. FOSSÉPREZ'S request to make use of the opportunity to visit gymnastics institutes in Greece and Italy was given financial backing of BF 1,500.¹⁴

The official departure of the Belgian delegation was planned for Sunday 15 April 1906 from the Brussels North Station. The train was to depart at 6.49 pm and follow the route Basel-Milan-Venice-Trieste from where a boat was to be taken on 17 April at 11.30 am of the *Lloyd Autrichien* towards Athens. That had to take them to Patras via Brindisi and Corfu.¹⁵ From there it was half an hour by train to Athens. Because the Belgian bikers and row-

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Clément Lefébure, called together a meeting on 18 February 1906 in order to ensure the Belgian participation in the 1906 Games. Thus, Lefébure became the actual founder of the Belgian Olympic Committee

ers had to attend competitions in France before the Games, they withdrew from this joint trip, as a result of which the CBJOA abandoned the idea of an official departure. Unlike most other national selections, the CBJOA did not choose to provide a Belgian uniform. However, it was insisted the members wear "an armband or other insignia with the national colours".¹⁶

Opening without Belgian "Turners"

The opening ceremony of the Games took place on Sunday 22 April at 3 pm in the Panathenaic Stadium in the presence of King GEORGE I of Greece and King EDWARD VII of the United Kingdom. More than 60,000 spectators saw how several Olympic rituals that are still part of the Olympic Games ceremonies were introduced. Following a speech by the Crown Prince CONSTANTINE, King GEORGE declared the Games open and for the first time the parade of the participating countries took place in which the participants march behind their country's flag.¹⁷ It is, however, not known who was Belgium's flag bearer.

The Games really took off with the country competition in gymnastics. Belgium, however, did not send any athletes for the gymnastics competitions. The reason for this absence can be found in the rivalry between Nicolaas-Jan CUPÉRUS, president

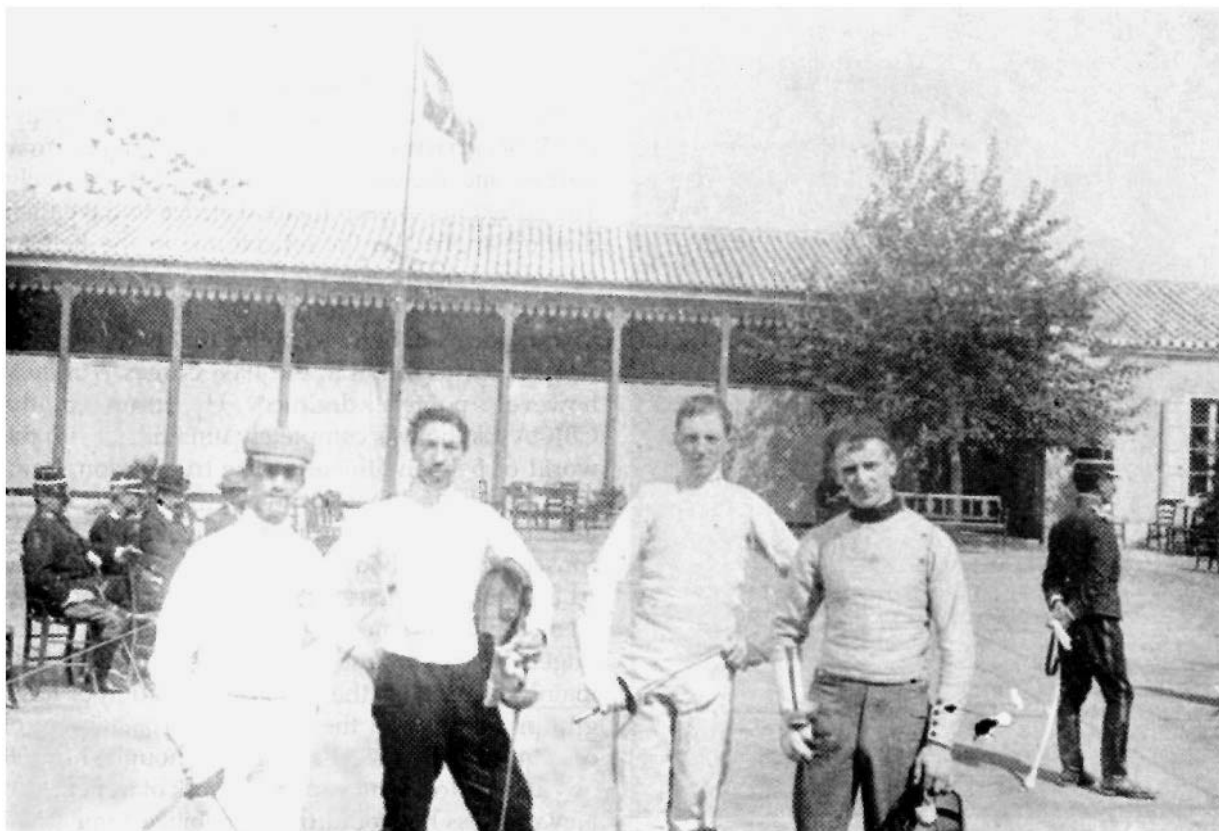
of the *Fédération Belge de Gymnastique* (FBG) and founding president of the *Fédération Européenne des Sociétés de Gymnastique* and Clément LEFÉBURE himself. CUPÉRUS and LEFÉBURE were the figureheads of two rival gymnastics systems, the German Turnen and the Swedish gymnastics respectively. The adherents to each method strove to have their method applied as the official one in the Belgian schools.¹⁸ Like LEFÉBURE, CUPÉRUS was contacted by the Athens Organising Committee with regard to the formation of a committee that had to ensure Belgian participation in the 1906 Games. CUPÉRUS, however, politely declined. He informed the CBJOA that he was completely unfamiliar with the world of Belgian athletes.¹⁹ The true reason, however, was the fact that he did not want to work with LEFÉBURE.²⁰ At the founding meeting of the CBJOA, consequently, nobody from the FBG was present. At the request of LEFÉBURE, the FBG was represented on the second meeting by its honorary president Eugène MIGNOT. MIGNOT emphasised that the FBG mainly focused on the physical education of large groups rather than the specific sports training of certain individuals. Therefore he thought himself not suitable to contribute to the work of the CBJOA. Nevertheless he would try to mobilize some gymnasts.²¹ LEFÉBURE replied the following to this:

"... don't all federal competitions of the gymnastics societies include individual exercises on the apparatus, like the horizontal bar, the rings and the parallel bars, in the same way as other sporting events represented here, the social utility of which nevertheless would not be contested?"²²

In fact, MIGNON was absent from the two following meetings of the CBJOA and no further effort was made by the FBG to organise a delegation of gymnasts. Yet at the very last CBJOA meeting MIGNOT proposed Marcel DUBOIS - member of the *Volksmaatschappij*, a gymnastics association in Ghent, and of the *Association Athlétique La Gantoise* - as a participant in the jumping tests, weightlifting and wrestling. DUBOIS would ultimately enter weightlifting and wrestling and for the latter he would win a bronze medal.²³

The Marksman Misses, the Foil Fencers Fail

A fellow countryman came into action the second day of the Games with the marksman TROFFAES. TROFFAES was the president of the *Union des Sociétés de Tir de Belgique* and member of the CBJOA's bureau. The discipline in which he participated was the Military Rifle over 300 metres in which 30 shots were to be fired at a bull's-eye with a diameter of one meter divided into ten concentric regions. From a total of 46 participants, TROFFAES was unable to get higher than 32nd place with 23 hits and a corresponding score of 125.²⁴



The Belgian épée team managed to win the bronze medal. From left to right: Edmond Crahay, Fernand de Montigny, Constant Cloquet and Philippe Le Hardy de Beaulieu

In fencing, the Belgians, in their own opinion, had the greatest chance at a medal²⁵ and although four of the five competitors cancelled in the run-up to the Games, the Belgian fencing delegation could still hark in three medals. There were eight fencing competitions scheduled of which two for professionals, the so-called fencing masters, and six for amateurs. The two events for professional fencers, the individual épée and sabre fencing, were both won by the 39-year-old Belgian Cyrille VERBRUGGE. With only two opponents and one opponent respectively the competition was very small for this Antwerp "master".²⁶ In the amateur competition, the Belgian expectations were not quite met.²⁷ In the individual foil competition - for which Edmond CRAHAY, Constant CLOQUET and Fernand DE MONTIGNY signed up - only the last of the three survived the group competition to go on to the semi-finals. Only DE MONTIGNY and CRAHAY participated in épée fencing. Both fencers of the *Cercle de l'Épée d'Anvers* ended first in their group but saw their efforts thwarted in the semi-finals. In the team competitions, the Belgian amateurs only participated in épée fencing. After first having beaten the Netherlands, the Belgians had to compete against the United Kingdom that same afternoon in the next round. This competition was anyway stopped halfway to be continued the next day. In the end, the Belgians were defeated by their British opponents

who later competed against France in the finals. France won, the United Kingdom got silver and Belgium bronze.²⁸ It is worth mentioning that the Belgian team, with CLOQUET (22), CRAHAY (22), DE MONTIGNY (21) and Philippe LE HARDY DE BEAULIEU (19), was made up only of rookies. The average age of the British team, for example, at 46 years, was more than twice that of the Belgians. Nevertheless, the 1906 Games marked the beginning of a successful Olympic career for DE MONTIGNY. He won gold with the épée team at the 1912 Stockholm Games, silver with the foil team and the épée team at the 1924 Paris Games and bronze with the épée team at the 1908 London Games. In 1920, he ended sixth in foil fencing at the Games in Antwerp and he won bronze with the national hockey team. Furthermore, he and his colleague L. SOMERS were appointed architects for the conversion the stadium of the *Beerschot Athletic Club* into the Olympic Stadium of Antwerp.²⁹



The 1906 Games were the beginning of a successful Olympic career for Fernand de Montigny. He succeeded in winning four more fencing medals and one hockey medal at four Olympic Games, which makes him the second most successful Belgian Olympic athlete of all time



Cedric Verbrugge

Small Cycling Success

Cycling was scheduled from day three onwards. There were five track competitions and one road competition, the cycling marathon, programmed. Eugène DEBOUGNIE was participating in the 1,000 metre sprint. Following a first place in one of the seven pre-trials and in one of the three semi-finals, he ended in the finals behind the unassailable Italian Francesco VERRI and the Brit Herbert BOUFFLER and came in third of the 28 participants. The 1,000 metres was by far his best event. At the 1905 world championship in Antwerp DEBOUGNIE sprinted to third place in the same discipline.³⁰

A day later, DEBOUGNIE came in a good fifth place on the one-track time-trial. VERRI, again, was the fastest of the 24. That same day DEBOUGNIE had to start in a pre-trial contest over 2,000 metres to qualify for the 5,000 metres. He won in his pre-trial with the fastest time of the group and therefore qualified for the semi-finals the day after. In that semi-finals, however, this time over 5,000 metres, he was eliminated. VERRI won the finals again.

The same day the 20 kilometres were also on the programme. Two Belgians, Prospère "ROMÉO" VERSCHULDEN and François VERSTRAETEN, participated in the pre-trials over half-distance. In fact, the participation of VERSTRAETEN is surrounded with a veil of secrecy. From the report of the last CBJOA meeting on 26 March 1906, it appears that he was replaced by ROMÉO since VERSTRAETEN did not wish to participate if the financing was not increased.³¹ The highly informative Belgian sports magazine *La vie sportive*, which published the report of this meeting and moreover reported on the achievements of the Belgians in Athens, made no further mention of VERSTRAETEN in its coverage following this incident. Still, VERSTRAETEN did start in the 20 km paced event on the track. Thanks to a second place in the fastest of four pre-trials he even qualified for the finals.³² For unknown reasons he did not participate in the finals. The Frenchman Fernand VAST, who occupied the spot that became available because of VERSTRAETEN'S forfeit, came third. ROMÉO also participated in the 20 km but failed in the pre-trials.³³



The start to the 80 km race in front of the Panathenaic stadium

In the 82 km road race on 1 May 1906, the next to last day of the Games, he did much better. VERSTRAETEN was registered for this distance too but never started. The route was the same as that of the marathon but twice as long. The cyclists left from the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, cycled 42 km to Marathon to turn around and return to Athens. Furthermore, the double cycling marathon and the running marathon took place the same afternoon. Max ORBAN, Belgian rower at the Games was in Marathon at the time as attendant to the Belgian marathon runner LESAGE.³⁴ He described his experiences as follows:

*"While waiting for [the marathon] to begin, I treated Verschelde [sic], in the cyclists' bend, he came in 4th, obliged to give up his place with the lead cyclists, which was composed of him and three French cyclists. Against a similar coalition, the battle was impossible and he had no choice but to keep fourth place forever."*³⁵

Apparently ROMÉO, at the turning point in Marathon, took the time for quick treatment. Still, he would keep his fourth place. The balance of the Belgians in cycling was generally not that poor with a third and two fourth places.

The Days at the races: The velodrome of Neo Phaleron was the site of the bicycle races at the 1906 Games which were dominated by the Italian Francesco Verri - always with the participation of Belgian cyclists

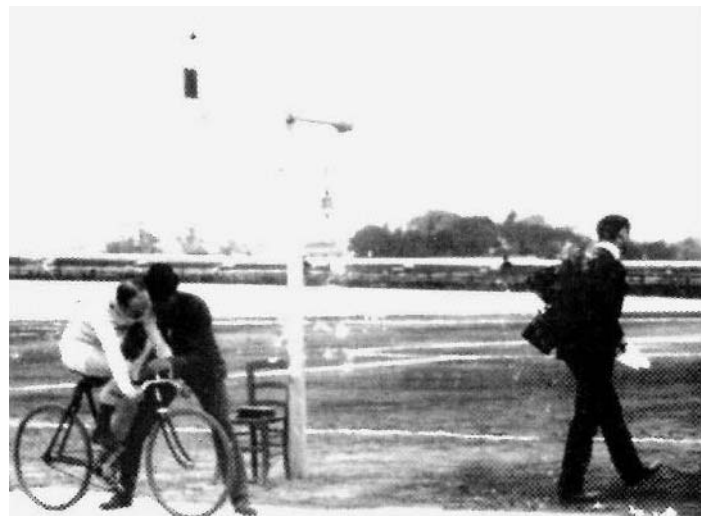
Ambiguous Athletic Achievements

In the actual marathon, the Greeks were of course hoping for a repetition of the Athens marathon in 1896 when their fellow countryman Spiridon Louis won. But the Belgian magazine *La vie sportive* also had high expectations:

*"It is perhaps on the 40 kilometres of Marathon that they [the Belgians] have the best chance against the English and the Americans. We shouldn't hide this."*³⁶

ORBAN, attendant to LESAGE, the only Belgian participant in the marathon, added the following:

*"Ah! It would be such a success if Lesage won the Marathon, if he arrived at the Stadium in one piece, because for this race, a competition like this excites people's chauvinism to the point of making it dangerous."*³⁷



On the eve of the race the 53 participants were brought to Marathon. According to Olympic historian Bill MALLON they spent the night in the house of Georgios SKOUZES, Greek minister for Foreign Affairs. However, ORBAN testified that in the morning he found the participants in bad condition when he arrived by bike in Marathon: they had to sleep on the floor, were bitten by fleas, had hardly slept and had eaten even less. "Was this about negligence or far-reaching Chauvinism as some wrongfully believe?", he wondered out loud.³⁸ The fact is that LESAGE had had a restless night and not digested well and collapsed the next day at kilometre 22, exhausted and empty. He was treated at one of the many ambulance posts that were placed along the route. ORBAN, who had encouraged LESAGE from his bicycle,³⁹ cycled to the leaders after this and eventually saw the Canadian William SHERRING win in 2h51. Under a burning sun - it was no less than 27°C - only 15 participants made it to the finish line.⁴⁰

A second Belgian who participated in athletics was Léon DUPONT. Just as LEFÉBURE, DUPONT was a fervent adherent of Swedish gymnastics. In 1902, he had obtained the gymnastics instructor diploma at the *Central Gymnastics Institute* in Stockholm, after which he set himself up as protagonist for Swedish gymnastics.⁴¹ In Athens, DUPONT participated in three jumping contests: standing long jump, high jump with run-up and standing high jump. DUPONT'S best performance was in the last of these disciplines. With a jump of 1m40 he drew second together with the Americans Martin SHERIDAN and Lawson ROBERTSON after Ray EWRY (1m56), another American. The standing long jump from rest yielded almost the same results: EWRY first (3m30), SHERIDAN second (3m095), ROBERTSON third (3m05) and DUPONT fourth (2m975). The high jump with

run-up was clearly not DUPONT'S strong point. It is not clear in which position he finished, but definitely not in the first eight.⁴² What was remarkable was that standing high jump first was not scheduled.⁴³ At the request of Max KAHN, president of the *Comité International des Sports Athlétiques* and member of the CBJOA, this discipline was included in the programme.⁴⁴ In any event, the standing high jump, along with the standing long jump was removed from the programme permanently after the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games.

Rowing ... in Henley

The selection of the Belgian rowers was very laborious. Yet, Belgium did belong to the absolute world top in rowing in that period, and this was precisely the problem. The *Club Nautique de Gand* and the *Sport Nautique de Gand*, the best rowing societies, did not want to disrupt their preparations for the Henley rowing regatta in England, and therefore let the Olympic Games pass! The Ghent rowers were nonetheless contacted personally by the Athens Organising Committee.⁴⁵ As a result, the Belgian rowing federations had to go looking for other suitable candidates. This may seem strange but the Henley regatta was the most important rowing event of the year. The British, Americans and Canadians even stayed away entirely from the Olympic rowing scene.⁴⁶ The brothers Max and Rémy ORBAN, members of the *Club Nautique de Gand* who would not participate in Henley, were then chosen for the pairs. A dual between the *Club Nautique de Gand* and the *Cercle de Régates de Bruxelles* in Wondelghem-lez-Gand was to determine the best fours. Ultimately, only the ORBAN brother pair would be sent out because the CBJOA only had money to send a pair.⁴⁷ The choice of the coxswain too was an obstacle for the ORBAN pair. First choice was a certain A. VAN LANDEGHEM.





The Belgian delegation seen in the ruins of the Parthenon. Front (left to right): Remi Orban, Edmond Crahay, Jules Lesage, Marcel Dubois. Middle: Fernand de Montigny, Trof-faes, Constant Cloquet, Prospère 'Roméo' Verschelden, delegation leader Clément Lefébure, Eugène Debougnie, Sauveur, Philippe Le Hardy de Beaulieu, Cyrille Verbrugge. Back: Max Orban, Léon Dupont

The question though was whether the weight of the coxswain was fixed by the international rules, namely, a minimum of 60 kg.⁴⁸ Apparently there were no weight regulations, as a result of which it was decided to leave VAN LANDEGHEM at home and look for a coxswain in Athens with a maximum weight of 30 kg.⁴⁹ Theofilakos PSILIAKOS, a young Greek, was the chosen one. In other words, we have to correct Mallon, when he stated that the Belgians apparently "[...] *did not know that a coxswain would be required*".⁵⁰ The Belgian-Greek coxed pair rowed to fourth place in the 1,000 metres, a race that according to ORBAN "*was wrong from the beginning*".⁵¹ In the mile they had to settle for silver behind the unbeatable Italian Bucintoro pair who also won the 1,000 metres.

Wrestling with Weights

Finally, the Belgians also participated in weightlifting and wrestling. Marcel DUBOIS was the only Belgian to participate in weightlifting. In the two-hand lift, he shared seventh place by pressing

108.5 kg. One-hand lifting did not do much more for him. He came in eighth out of twelve with 60.4 kg. In Greek-Roman wrestling on the other hand, DUBOIS was convincing: in the heavyweights DUBOIS came in third.⁵² Aged nineteen, he was youngest medal winner in Athens but four.⁵³

In the middleweight category of the Greek-Roman wrestling SAUVEUR, another Belgian, managed an *ex aequo* fifth place together with three other participants. He only ensured a win in his first match, a two-hour marathon match against the American Daniel SULLIVAN. According to MALLON a Belgian took part in the lightweight competition too: René DOBRINOVITZ of the *Panhellinos Gymnastikos Syllogos Constantinople Heraklis*. DOBRINOVITZ, however, never appeared in either the CBJOA's reports or in the *La vie sportive*. The *Bulletin du Comité des*

Jeux Olympiques à Athènes even classified him as Greek. He achieved a shared fourth place.⁵⁴ The last word clearly has not yet been said on the Belgian participation in Athens ...

Epilogue

It may be clear that the selection and delegation of the Belgian team to the 1906 Games in Athens took some effort. The attempts of founder and Secretary-General of the *Comité Belge des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes* (CBJOA) Clément LEFÉBURE to organise everything smoothly were thwarted by the fickle and ambiguous attitude of the Belgian government, the sports federations, the sports clubs and the athletes. Although the minister of Internal Affairs and Public Education, Jules DE TROOZ, appointed himself honorary president and he recognised co-president Cyrille VAN OVERBERGH, Director-General of Higher Education within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Education, as the official representative within the CBJOA, he did not make a budget available for a Belgian participation in the 1906 Games. Indeed, he was lambasted for this in *La vie sportive*:

*"The public education budget, in France, provides for significant funding of athletic sports organisations. Nothing similar exists here, where it's all left to private initiative."*⁵⁵

As concerns the sports federations themselves, the *Fédération Belge de Gymnastique* refused to participate. The other sports federations indeed had no objections in principle but yet participation to the Intercalated Games was not considered the highest priority. That was also true for clubs and athletes. Although the *Fédération Belge des Cercles d' Escrime* for instance emphasised the importance of a strong fencing delegation in Athens, it could not convince its best fencers - afraid of the eruption of smallpox - to participate. The best Belgian rowers and marksmen in turn stayed away because they preferred other, more prestigious competitions. *L'indépendance belge* aptly recapitulated the Belgian participation: the Belgian delegation would have been able to achieve much better results if they had been more systematic in the selection of athletes, if there had been more money available for a larger participation and if the exaggerated commotion around the smallpox epidemic had not taken place.⁵⁶

Despite the negative attitude of the Belgian sports magazines,⁵⁷ the Belgian delegation did not do badly in Athens. If we were to include the silver medal of the Belgian-Greek rowing combination, the Belgians brought seven medals - two gold, two silver and three bronze - home from Greece. Of the 20 participating countries, Belgium settled in 11th

position in the country rank listing based on the total number of achieved medals. More importantly, the Games were at the base of the establishment of the *Belgian Olympic Committee* which celebrates its 100th birthday 2006. Although Belgium in 1906 had already known three different IOC members, none of them succeeded in establishing an Olympic Committee in their country,⁵⁸ as they had been charged to do.⁵⁹ The Greek Organising Committee did find the right person in Clément LEFÉBURE. The green light for an Olympic movement in Belgium was given.

Notes

- 1 See AMEYE, Thomas/DELHEYE, Pascal, "Expansionism, physical education and Olympism: common interests of King Leopold II of Belgium, Cyrille Van Overbergh and Pierre de Coubertin (1894-1914)", Paper to be submitted to *Olympika: International Journal of Olympic Studies*; DELHEYE, Pascal, *Struggling for gymnastics. The scientisation and institutionalisation of physical education in Belgium (1830-1914)*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Leuven 2005.
- 2 These Games are officially categorised as the "2nd International Olympic Games in Athens" by the IOC. Although their historic significance they are not recognised as Olympic Games. They are often labelled as "Intermediate" or "Intercalated" Games. This second designation is adopted in this contribution. For clarification on the historic importance and the status of the 2nd International Olympic Games in Athens see LENNARTZ, Karl, "The 2nd International Olympic Games in Athens 1906", in *Journal of Olympic History* 10(2002), pp. 3-25.
- 3 This appeared from the letters LEFÉBURE wrote to - among others - DE COUBERTIN and VAN OVERBERGH and from letters from the Greek Organising Committee to DE COUBERTIN. Archives of the Olympic Museum of Lausanne: Notice 0101993, Correspondance à Pierre de Coubertin 1906-1907; Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
- 4 In this regard, he had contacted the leaders of the sporting federations (that encompassed the sports that were listed on the Athens Intercalated games). In addition to him, Baron Edouard DE LAVELEYE, chairman of the *Union belge des Sociétés des Sports athlétiques*, Max KAHN, chairman of the *Comité international des Sports athlétiques*, DE SAHUGUET, secretary for the *Fédération belge des Sociétés d' Aviron*, Captain HENRION, teacher at the *Ecole normale de Gymnastique et d' Escrime*, Pierre WALCKIERS, secretary for the *Ligue belge de Lawn-Tennis* and Jules LE GRAND, Greek vice-consul at Ghent, were present at the founding meeting. *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 février 1906*. Brussels State Archives T038, 504.
- 5 *Bulletin du Comité des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes* (28 March 1906, pp. 1-2). Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
- 6 *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 mars 1906*. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504; "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (3 April 1906, pp. 1-2); AMEYE/DELHEYE, "Expansionism, physical education and Olympism".
- 7 *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 février 1906*. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
- 8 *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 mars 1906*. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504; "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (23 March 1906, p. 1). Twenty-one names were transferred to the Greek Organising Committee! (*Jeux Olympiques 1906, Jeux Olympiques 1906: liste des participants*, s.l. 1906.)
- 9 Paul ANSPACH was nevertheless member of the CBJOA. Moreover, he would become one of Belgium's most successful Olympic athletes. He took part in the fencing competitions at the Olympic Games of London 1908, Stockholm

- 1912, Antwerp 1920, and Paris 1924 and managed to win two gold and two silver medals and a bronze medal.
- 10 "L'escrime. Jeux Olympiques", in *La vie sportive* (10 April 1906, p. 2).
 - 11 *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 mars 1906*, p. 2. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504; "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (3 April 1906, p. 1).
 - 12 The Ministry of War granted LEFÉBURE one month's paid leave. COUSEBANDT D'ALKEMADE, Alexandre, to DE TROOZ, Jules, letter dated 7 April 1906; LEFÉBURE, Clément, to VAN OVERBERGH, Cyrille, letter dated 15 March 1906. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
 - 13 VAN OVERBERGH, Cyrille, to DE TROOZ, Jules, letter dated 17 March 1906. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
 - 14 DE TROOZ, Jules, to FOSSEPREZ, Auguste, letter dated 11 April 1906. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
 - 15 *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 mars 1906*. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
 - 16 "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (3 April 1906, p. 1).
 - 17 LENNARZ, Karl, "The 2nd International Olympic Games in Athens 1906", in *Journal of Olympic history* 10(2002), pp. 3-25; MALLON, Bill, *The 1906 Olympic Games: results for all competitors in all events with commentary*, Jefferson/North Carolina/London 1999, pp. 78-91.
 - 18 See DELHEYE, Pascal, "Struggling for gymnastics in Belgium. The rhetorics of the Battle of the Systems (1860-1914)", in *Stadion: international journal of the history of sport* (2006, in press). See also DELHEYE, *Struggling for gymnastics*.
 - 19 "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (23 March 1906, p. 1).
 - 20 Stockholm National Archives: Lars Mauritz Törngren Arkiv: 8XLI, 2238.
 - 21 *Procès verbal de la séance du 18 mars 1906*. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
 - 22 "... tous les concours fédéraux des sociétés de gymnastique ne comportent-ils pas des concours d'exercices individuels aux agrès, tels que la barre fixe, les anneaux et les barres parallèles ; de la même façon que d'autres activités sportives représentées ici, et dont l'utilité sociale cependant ne saurait être contestée?" Ibid.; "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (23 March 1906, p. 1).
 - 23 DUBOIS came very close to not participating in the Games. Since an arrangement was then already made for the division of the obtained budget and an extra athlete also meant less funding, not all federation heads were too keen on his participation. Armand SOLVAY, son of Ernest SOLVAY and member of the CBJOA as president of the *Fédération belge de Lawn-tennis*, who called himself a great supporter of "athletic sports" then ensured DUBOIS' participation with a personal gift of 200 Belgian francs. "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (3 April 1906, p. 1).
 - 24 "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", in *Bulletin du Comité des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes* (2 June 1906, pp. 109-110); MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, pp. 78-91.
 - 25 "L'escrime. Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (2 March 1906, p. 2).
 - 26 ORBAN, Max, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (8 May 1906, p. 1); "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", p. 134; MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 89-91; "Les Belges aux Jeux Olympiques", in *L'expansion belge* 1(1908)7, p. 299.
 - 27 "Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (1 May 1906, p. 3).
 - 28 "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", pp. 120-133; MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, pp. 78-91.
 - 29 RENSON, Roland, *The Games reborn. The VIIIth Olympiad Antwerp 1920, Antwerp/Ghent 1996*, p. 19; DE SMEDT, Hans, *Een eeuw wereldsport. De Olympische Spelen en België*, Brussels 1994, pp. 8-18.
 - 30 "Les belges aux Jeux Olympiques", in *L'expansion belge* 1(1908)7:299; MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, pp. 65-67; ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (8 May 1906, p. 1). "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats Officiels", pp. 150-154, 156-157.
 - 31 "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (3 April 1906, p. 1).
 - 32 The qualifying rounds were involved riding ten kilometers.
 - 33 "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", pp. 158-159; MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, pp. 70-73.
 - 34 He was also a jury member for the marathon.
 - 35 "En attendant le départ [of the marathon] j'avais été soigné Vershelde [sic], au virage des cyclistes, il y était arrivé 4me, obligé de lâcher le peloton de tête, qui se composait de lui et de trois Français. Contre une pareille coalition, la lutte était impossible et force de lui fut de garder éternellement la quatrième place." Fernand VAST was again the best. ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (18 May 1906, p. 1).
 - 36 "C'est peut-être encore sur les 40 kilomètres de Marathon qu'ils [the Belgians] ont la chance la plus appréciable contre les Anglais et les Américains. Ne nous le dissimulons pas." "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (27 March 1906, p. 1).
 - 37 "Ah! Si Lesage gagnait le Marathon quel succès, s'il arrive au Stade en entier, car il y a pour cette course une compétition telle qu'elle excite le chauvinisme du peuple au point de le rendre dangereux." ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (4 May 1906, p. 2).
 - 38 ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (18 May 1906, p. 1).
 - 39 Each runner was allowed to be followed by a single bicycle-riding attendant. LOVETT, Charlie, *Olympic marathon. A centennial history of the Games' most storied race*, Westport, Connecticut/London 1997, p. 18.
 - 40 Dorando PIETRI was one of the participants to give up. He would be the protagonist in the incident-filled finale of the London marathon in 1908. MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, pp. 44-46.
 - 41 For more information on Léon DUPONT and his actions in favour of Swedish gymnastics see AMEYE, Thomas/DELHEYE, Pascal/RENSON, Roland, "Pioniers van de kinesitherapie in België [Pioneers of physiotherapy in Belgium]", in TERLOUW, T.J.A. *Geschiedenis van de fysiotherapie gezien door ander ogen* [History of physiotherapy seen in different light], Amsterdam 2004.
 - 42 MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, pp. 49-54. According to ORBAN, DUPONT stayed way below his personal record. ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (15 May 1906, p. 2).
 - 43 Comité des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes, *Jeux Olympiques Internationaux à Athènes: règlements: première partie*, Athènes 1905, p. 14.
 - 44 *Procès verbal de la séance du 27 février 1906*. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504; Lefébure, Clément, to the members of the Comité belge des Jeux Olympiques à Athènes, letter dated 8 March 1906. Brussels State Archives: T038, 504.
 - 45 "L'Aviron. Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (27 February 1906, p. 2). They did very well in Henley. The Ghent mixed team, with rowers from the *Club Nautique de Gand* and the *Sport Nautique de Gand*, was after all the first foreign team to succeed in winning the Grand Challenge Cup, the rowing competition for eight oared boats and the high point of the Henley Royal Regatta. "Les régates royales de Henley", in *L'expansion belge* 2(1909)7, p. 490.
 - 46 MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 105.
 - 47 "L'aviron. Fédération belge des Sociétés d'Aviron", in *La vie sportive* (23 March 1906, p.5).
 - 48 *Procès verbal de la séance du 27 février 1906*. Brussels State Archives T038, 504.
 - 49 "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (3 April 1906, p. 1).
 - 50 MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 105.

- 51 ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (8 May 1906, p. 1); "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", pp. 142-145. MALLON ranks them as fifth. MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 107.
- 52 ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (8 May 1906, p. 1); MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 145-146, 152; "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", pp. 95, 97.
- 53 MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 29. According to Max ORBAN, it made no difference if he was first to finish. ORBAN, "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (8 May 1906, p. 1).
- 54 "Jeux Olympiques Internationaux 1906. Résultats officiels", pp. 96-97, 148; MALLON, *The 1906 Olympic Games*, p. 150-151.
- 55 "Le budget de l'instruction publique, en France, prévoit un subside important aux sociétés de sports athlétiques. Rien de semblable n'existe chez nous, où tout est laissé à l'initiative privée." "Les Jeux Olympiques d'Athènes", in *La vie sportive* (27 March 1906, p. 1).
- 56 (11 May 1906).
- 57 *Le sportsman* (6 May 1906) stated: "... il faut bien avouer que nous n'avons rien fait d'extraordinaire, si l'on croit les journaux étrangers qui ne sont pas précisément remplis du récit des exploits de nos athlètes" [... we should acknowledge that we didn't do anything extraordinary, if we believe the foreign newspapers that are not exactly full of accounts of the exploits of our athletes].
- 58 Maxime DE BOUSIES was IOC member from 1894 till 1901, Robert REYNTIENS from 1901 till 1903, and Henri DE BAILLET-LATOUR from 1903 till 1942. For more information on their membership and their failure in the founding of a Belgium Olympic Committee see AMEYE, Thomas/DELHEYE, Pascal, "Expansionism, physical education and Olympism: common interests of King Leopold II of Belgium, Cyrille Van Overbergh and Pierre de Coubertin (1894-1914)", Paper to be submitted to *Olympika: International Journal of Olympic Studies*.
- 59 In the second issue of the *Revue Olympique*, the IOC members were encouraged to propagate an Olympic Movement in their respective countries and to set up national committees to assure participation in the Olympic Games. *Revue Olympique* 1(1894)2, p. 1.