

Dick
Werner

Statement of Walter F. O'Malley
President of the Los Angeles Dodgers
Before Assembly Committee on
Governmental Efficiency and Economy
on May 15, 1958

Los Angeles City officials and others have explained to this Committee the terms of the contract between the City of Los Angeles and the Dodgers. I believe it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the contract or its provisions, as we are not actively participating in the political campaign pertaining to the referendum. However, John S. Gibson, President of the Los Angeles City Council, has invited me to appear here today, and I am delighted to do so. My purpose will be to discuss, not the details of the contract, but rather our plans for operating in Los Angeles -- our plans for building a stadium and for a Youth Program.

A New Major League Stadium

The Dodgers propose to build the first truly modern baseball stadium in the country. The last stadium to be built with baseball money was Yankee Stadium in 1923. The stadia built since that date in Milwaukee, Kansas City, Baltimore, St. Paul, and generally in most



cities having new baseball facilities, have been built and maintained on tax-exempt property. The proposed stadium in San Francisco follows the same pattern.

We were advised that Los Angeles was not prepared to build a stadium for us on tax-exempt property. This fitⁱⁿ with my own thinking. It so happens that for ten years I have been old-fashioned enough to believe that a ball club should build its own stadium on its own land and that the stadium and land should be subject to normal taxes. The stadium in Chavez Ravine, therefore, is to be financed by the Dodgers, and the stadium and the land will be subject to normal taxes.

Most people are familiar with the public conception of our new stadium. In beauty, landscaping, maintenance, and comfort, it will be absolutely the finest baseball park in the nation. We feel sure that it will be a conversation piece and a point of interest for residents to show their out-of-town visitors, even when events are not scheduled there.

The Milwaukee Stadium has been a terrific success, but from an engineering standpoint, it is merely a more up-to-date copy of Ebbets Field. I do not mean this as criticism, but it is a fact that wherever there is a



post or column to obstruct the fans' view in Ebbets Field, there is one present in Milwaukee. Like Ebbets Field, the Milwaukee Stadium starts from the ground and goes 180 feet vertically up in the air. This means a large percentage of the fans have to walk a great vertical distance to their seats. Because I believe our patrons are entitled to greater comfort, our stadium is designed so that parking shelves will be on the same level as the patron's seat.

Our stadium will have five different levels, taking full advantage of the steep terrain at Chavez Ravine. Out of this rugged area it will be possible to carve enough level shelves to accommodate the stadium and approximately 17,500 automobiles. It is interesting to note that Santa Anita racetrack and Hollywood Park can accommodate 40,000 patrons, and they each have parking for 30,000 cars. Since we plan to accommodate 52,000 persons on a given day, we are hopeful that we can expand our parking area.

We must recognize that the football Coliseum will not do as a permanent Major League baseball park. Commissioner of Baseball Ford C. Frick, and the President of the National League, Warren Giles, have been out-spoken in indicating that we have approval only on a temporary



basis to occupy the Coliseum. The future of the franchise is dependent on a new Major League baseball park being built with a traditional playing field of proper Major League dimensions. The Dodgers want to stay in Los Angeles and build such a park.

