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W
April 4, 1962

Hon. Robert Moses
New York World's Fair
1964-1965 Corporation
P.O. Box 1964
Flushing Meadow Park
Flushing 52, New York

Re: Jai-Alai Arena

Dear Commissioner Moses:

Mr. Reubin Guterman of 69 Morris Drive, East Meadow, L.I., New York and Mr. Albert A. Deeb of Madison Park Gardens, Port Washington, L.I., New York, were in to see me with reference to the construction of a Jai-Alai Arena in the Lake Area. They had intended constructing a building in Forest Hills so they have their building plans and cost estimates completed. They have decided that it would be profitable for them to move into the Fair itself. They proposed constructing an arena and restaurant which will look like the building in the enclosed clipping from the New York Herald Tribune. They expect the building to cost in excess of \$1,500,000. and are prepared to construct and demolish the building in accordance with the requirements of the Fair. They would take approximately two acres which would be located immediately north of the proposed theater site.

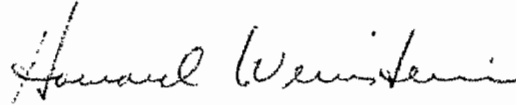
They would be willing to sign a lease for approximately two acres at a guaranteed minimum of \$2. a square foot against a percentage of 5% on the first \$2,000,000 of gross receipts and 10% of amounts in excess of \$2,000,000. per year. The Fair would receive 50% of the amounts received from concessionaires. They have agreed to pay \$1. a square foot on signing of the contract and the other \$1. a square foot in January of 1963.

Hon. Robert Moses

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Authority of the Executive Committee is hereby requested to conclude negotiations and sign a lease for the Jai-Alai Arena in accordance with the above terms on a form of lease substantially similar to the lease between the Fair and Continental Circus, Inc.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Samuel Weinstein".

HW:fs

cc: Mr. Stuart Constable
Mr. William Kane

Back After 24 Years

Jai-Alai Fronton Planned for Queens by June

By Erwin Grossman

Several weeks ago two bulldozers leveled almost five acres of ground on 99th St. between Christie Ave. and 80th Ave. in Elmhurst, Queens. Sometime next week—when application for a building permit is approved—a group of men will meet on this site and participate in ground breaking ceremonies for the building of the first jai-alai fronton (arena) in New York State.

The \$2 million structure is expected to be in operation by June 1. It will contain 3,600 plush theater-type seats, each with an unobstructed view of the playing court, a restaurant and a cocktail lounge. It will also advertise in big thick-black lettering: "No Gambling Allowed."

You don't have to say it. Reuben Guterman, Long Island contractor and executive vice-president in charge of operations for the Forest Hills Americana, Ltd., has heard a hundred-thousand times over that jai-alai (pronounced hi-li) can't make a go of it without pari-mutuel betting. He thinks it can. In fact his group is already contemplating two more frontons in New York City and is negotiating for arenas in Hartford, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Dallas.

In Buffalo another jai-alai syndicate was formed by restaurateur Nick Mariello, who is urging the state legislature to approve pari-mutuel betting.

The game of jai-alai is a speeded-up version of three-wall handball in which a pelota (a ball of hard rubber and a double goatskin covering) is propelled around a three-walled court at dazzling speed by a cesta (basket-glove).

It has often been referred to as the fastest game in the world. In Florida it has reached a peak of popularity, mainly because betting is allowed.

In 1938 the late Mike Jacobs tried unsuccessfully to promote jai-alai in the old Hippodrome. It was felt that it failed because betting was permitted.

Financier Ted Polly is the group's president; contractor Barney Monte is secretary, and Jose Cruz Salsamendi is vice-president. It is Salsamendi, player's manager, matchmaker and chief judge at the Hollywood (Fla.) Dania Fronton, who will supply the Basque and Spanish players for New York.

Originally the jai-alai group sought movie theaters in which to house their promotion. But for the most part they were too small. The Pelota Fronton, which is the name of the new arena, will be 60 feet high, multi-colored and of a modern motif. It will be less than two miles from the Forest Hills tennis stadium; seven blocks from the IRT subway and two blocks from the Long Island Railroad.

The front wall of the fronton, which is on the viewer's right, will be 34 feet high to the foul line and will be made of eight-inch thick granite blocks. The side and back walls will be made of concrete and covered with gunite. The playing court will be 180 feet long, 47 feet high to the top of the screen and .35 feet wide, with an additional 16 feet of court surface to enable players to capture shots which angle toward the guard screen.

There are presently only two schools in Spain from which 90 per cent of the jai-alai players originate. It is there that boys from eight to 13 learn to become professionals. It is Americana's plan to start a jai-alai youth movement to encourage interest in the sport here. For the first time jai-alai competition will be held in the 1964 Olympics.

The Buffalo syndicate does not plan to build a fronton unless it gets pari-mutuel permission from the state. Mariello said yesterday that he plans to run his jai-alai season from November through March when no race-track is operating upstate.

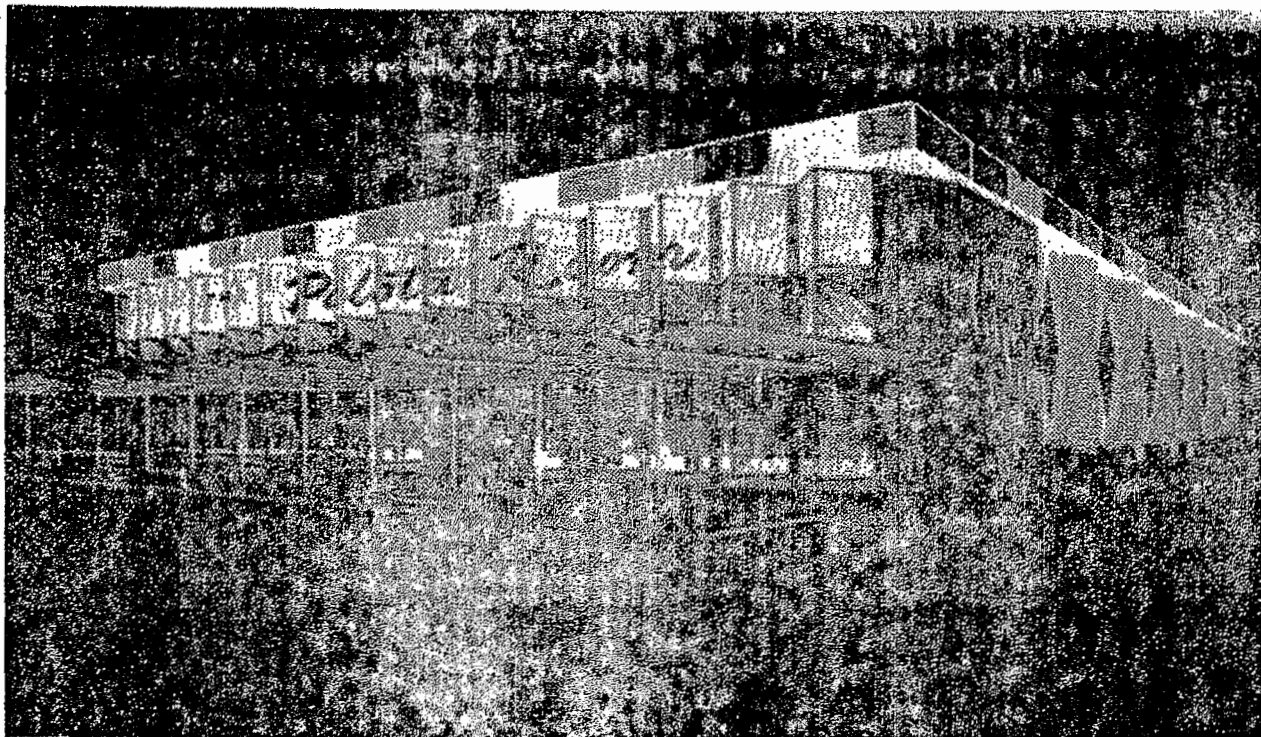
"I have not encountered opposition from any state legislature with whom I have

discussed the plan," Mariello said. "If we can't get it this year, we'll try again in 1963."

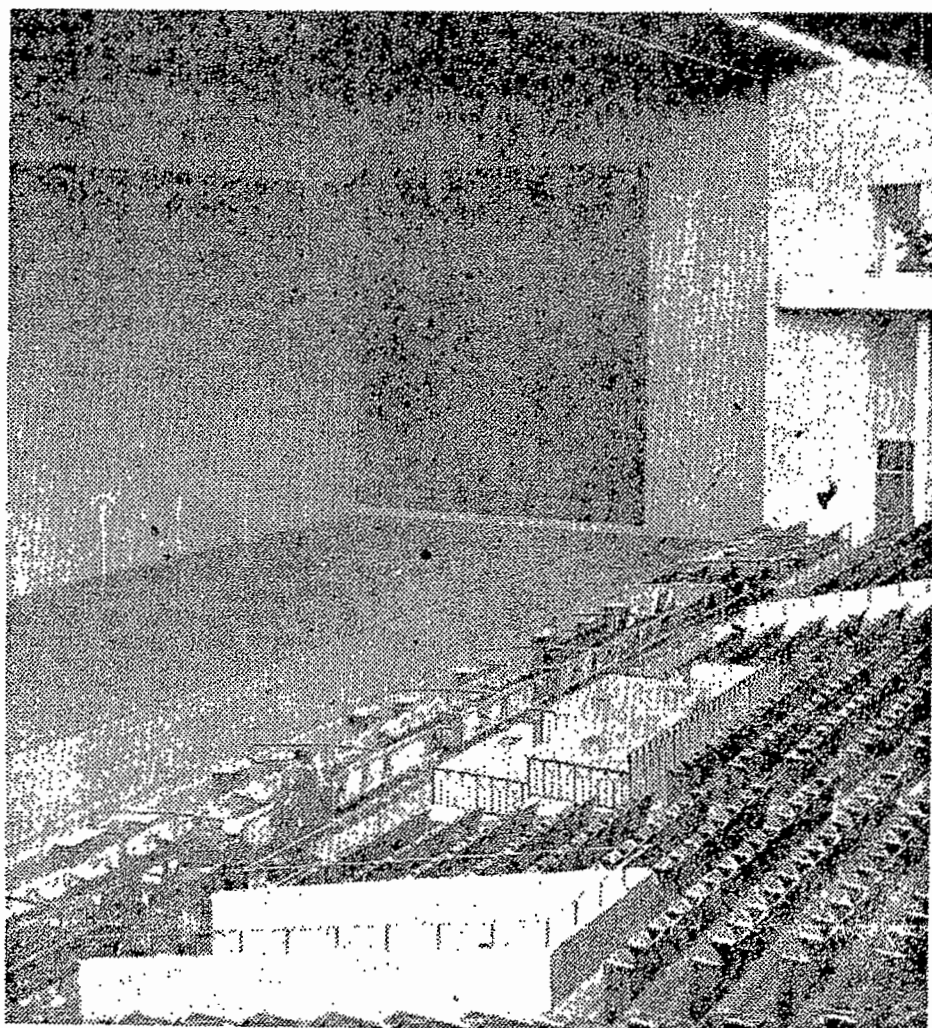
Under the present state constitution pari-mutuel betting is limited only to thoroughbred and harness horse tracks. An amendment would be required for jai-alai bet-

ting. Under Mariello's plan the state would withhold a portion of the jai-alai handle in the same manner the race tracks earnings are taxed. He is also in favor of a commissioner to regulate the sport.

Under a pari-mutuel plan Mariello estimates the state would get an additional \$30 to \$40 million in tax revenue a year and would create about 3,000 permanent jobs in the state.



SOMETHING NEW—Architects' conception of jai-alai fronton to be built in Elmhurst, Queens. Ground-breaking ceremonies are planned for next week. Architect is Richard I. Pezenik.



Playing area of jai-alai arena planned at Christie Ave. and 90th Ave., Elmhurst, will resemble this Florida plant with fronton at right. Opening is set for about June 1.