

Speech by the Prime Minister of Norway, Mr. Odvar Nordli,  
at the Opening Ceremony of the 2nd Olympic Winther Games  
for Disabled - Geilo, Norway, February 1st, 1980.

*Yours Royal Highness.*

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Norwegian Government and the  
Norwegian people, I have the great pleasure of welcoming you  
all to our country.

You have come here to Geilo from different corners  
of the world to take part in the 2nd Olympic Winther Games  
for Disabled. I am quite sure that you all have been pre-  
paring for this event for a long time. During the coming  
days you will put your abilities to a harder test than  
perhaps ever before.

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It is the law of sports, as it is the law of life,  
that you cannot all win. Only one will be the Champion in  
each event.

Remember then, however, that in a way you are all  
winners. You have already succeeded in overcoming your  
handicap. In this you are all Champions.

Winther sports are, as you know, an important part  
of Norwegian life. We like to boast that skiing as we know  
it today, was "invented" in this country. We also feel  
delighted when inhabitants of other countries discover the  
pleasures of skiing and other forms of winter sports.

When you go skiing or sledge racing, such things as nationality, race and religion become less important. The pleasure of physical activity is therefore an important factor in promoting international understanding and friendship between people.

Physical training is even more important to you. It enables you to prove again and again that what was regarded impossible for handicapped people just a few years ago, is not impossible at all.

Proving that the impossible is not impossible after all, has always been the challenge of mankind. This has brought man to the moon and to the highest mountain peaks on earth. Now, this spirit has brought you here to Geilo and to Norway, and to these games.

Welcome to our country one and all, and good luck during the days to come!