

1928

Today, most baseball stadiums are planned and financed as municipal projects. But that was not always so. Until the era of franchise shifts turned ballclubs into de facto municipal assets, parks were usually privately constructed and operated. This was true of virtually all of the "classic" major league playgrounds: Forbes, Ebbetts and Wrigley Fields, Fenway and Shibe Parks, and Yankee Stadium among them. A few government officials, however, saw advantages in developing public facilities that would attract major sporting events. One of the first was Samuel Hopkins, city manager in Cleveland in the 1920s. He asked his City Council for approval to submit to the electorate a \$2.5 million bond issue to construct a municipal stadium. Hopkins' original goal was the 1932 Olympic Games. On Nov. 6, 1928, Cleveland voters approved the bond issuance and work began on the 78,189 seat stadium, which occupied a former dump near Lake Erie. As fate would have it, Cleveland did not host the 1932 Games, which went to Los Angeles. Instead, the Indians agreed to occupy the facility for weekend games since those might draw larger crowds than cozy League Park could accommodate. (League Park remained home to weekday games until 1946.) Today, of course, a baseball franchise would hardly think twice of asking its municipality for a new publicly funded park, plus sky boxes, spacious parking and mass transportation access. In 1932, the Indians were practically given one for free...and didn't much want it.

ELSEWHERE IN BASEBALL During the annual winter meetings, National League President John Heydler proposes use of a designated hitter for the pitcher. American League owners reject the idea as too radical. Philadelphia left-hander Lefty Grove strikes out the side against Chicago on just nine pitches in the seventh inning of a game Sept. 27.

IN THE WORLD The Kellogg-Briand Pact, drawn up Aug. 27, outlaws war; a total of 62 nations ultimately sign it.