

A standard organisation for the olympiads.

It had been thought possible that the Olympiad held in London in 1908 might become the standard, or type, by which the organisers of future Olympiads would be guided; but from what is at present known of the programme which has been drawn up for the games at Stockholm next year it is clear that this has not been the case. The outstanding difference between the Fourth (London) and the Fifth (Stockholm) Olympiads will be in the matter of equestrian events; for, thanks to the active co-operation of the Comte de Rosen, a skilled horseman who is an ideal organiser of such competitions, the series of important events which will be included promise to be a very imposing feature of the games. On the other hand, many of the contests which appeared on the London programme have been suppressed, the unsuitability of the ground, the climate, the conditions, being given as reasons for their decision not to include them by the Stockholm organisers.

It is a great pity that there is this lack of uniformity as regards the events at successive Olympiads; and, therefore, the announcement that the International Olympic Committee will shortly draw up a programme which shall serve as a standard for future Olympiads will be received with general satisfaction. This typical, or standard programme will be a guide for all future organisers the value of which cannot be over-estimated; for it will be a model to which all organising countries must henceforth adhere. In this, as in the other delicate matters of control, it is impossible not to admire the wisdom with which the International Olympic Committee introduced this important change. Slow and sure is the motto of the Committee; and, therefore, the work of progress is thoroughly done, whereas precipitancy would be fatal. During the experimental stages, while the Olympic Games were seedlings being acclimatised in strange lands, the greatest caution was necessary, and the organisers had to be allowed much latitude; but now that they have become firmly established (deeply-rooted, to continue the metaphor) it is right

and necessary that certain hard and fast, guiding rules should be laid down, for it is only in this way that the games can fulfil their ultimate high destiny.

The most important thing of all is to draw up a list of obligatory events, which no organising country shall be free to change — neither to cancel nor to increase. Secondly, the standardisation of distances is imperative, so that the anomaly of the present system may be banished; for now, owing to the difference between the various standards of measurements, uniformity is unobtainable, and races supposed to be over a standard distance differ in length considerably according to the place in which they are run. And, again, when once an event, such as boxing, has been admitted (as it should be) there is no reason why it should be eliminated from the programme of the following Olympiads. At the same time, it is clear that the independance of each organising country must be rigorously maintained and respected. The adoption of any other course would be little short of disastrous; for as it would choke national and individual enterprise, to which the games owe so much, it would deprive the celebrations of the originality and diversity which constitute one of their greatest charms. Also, it would be contrary to the ideal at which the organisers of the modern Olympiads aim : that each country shall impress its own celebration with its national individuality, so that each Olympiad may be stamped by the genius, thought, manners, and civilisation of the organising people.

So, it will be seen that, while laying down broad rules, the International Olympic Committee will not seek to interfere with any of the details of organisation. Indeed, such an attempt would be foredoomed to failure . . . and, if it could be enforced, it would be a most regrettable proceeding to exercise such authority. It is, therefore, a most delicate matter, requiring the exercise of fine diplomacy, to decide in how far rules shall be made and to what extent the organisers shall be left free to follow out their own ideas; and it is clear that the International Olympic Committee is the only body which is competent and powerful enough to perform such a task successfully. With the help and advice of the active and most useful National Committees, modelled and working on the same lines as the British Olympic Council, which have been formed in most of the countries where sports are practised, the Olympic organisation is very strong, and the International Committee can very well

undertake the responsibility of devising what shall be accepted as a standard Olympiad. Indeed, satisfactory progress has already been made with the work ; but although this has been rapidly done, owing to the fact that the National Committees are composed of men who are competent to form an opinion of the requirements of the countries they represent, as the delegates of associations and clubs, it is evident that the task cannot be completed soon enough for the « standard » to come into force before the Stockholm Olympiad takes place. And, therefore, not until the Sixth Olympiad is held, in 1916, will the games be modelled upon the standard programme. From that celebration onwards, however, it will be in force; and then the scope of the modern Olympiads will be clearly and finally defined, so that their aim and destiny, and their ever-increasing utility, may be more justly appreciated.



La bicyclette et l'hésitation.

L'hésitation joue, dans presque tous les sports, un rôle néfaste. Elle peut provoquer des accidents; elle entretient en tous cas la maladresse et diminue sensiblement le plaisir goûté. Pourtant ce rôle est d'une très inégale importance dans un sport ou dans un autre. Un footballeur ou un tenniseur hésitants resteront de médiocres joueurs et ne feront pas de progrès; voilà tout. Le patineur qui hésite finit toujours par tourner à droite ou à gauche et par dessiner presque malgré lui quelque figure rudimentaire : il ne tombe pas pour cela. Le cavalier, en pareil cas, a la ressource de s'en remettre à sa monture et le nombre est, en réalité, bien plus grand qu'il ne paraît, des hommes qui laissent à leur cheval le soin de se décider pour eux. Entre le cheval et l'homme s'établit une sorte de « symphonie » tacite; on dirait qu'ils se comprennent ; les apparences sont sauvées ; le passant croit que l'homme a choisi tandis que c'est le cheval. Si l'escrimeur est par trop voué à l'hésitation, il est naturellement amené à demeurer sur la défensive et à faire un jeu de parades avec ce qu'il pourra de ripostes. Chez le rameur, l'énergie, la persévérance sont fortement mises à contribution mais, n'ayant guère de déci-