

# Olympic Games in a Small Country

Written upon leaving the aerodrome with the city of Helsinki and lofty Olympic Stadium tower below. August, 1939

During a tour of Europe undertaken in the interests of skiing at the Fifth Olympic Winter Games I arrived in Helsinki and had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the organization and the architectural preparations. It is not out of a sense of courtesy of a guest but from my own personal conviction that I say that Finland will master this task in an outstanding manner. There is no single point in the organization that would lead one to suspect that the Finns have had only half the usual time for preparation. Part of the structures, such as the regatta course and the demonstration hall are completed, and the stadium will be placed in active use during the present year and tested out in every particular. The same is true of the velodrome. The Olympic Village will be under roof by the end of the year and the swimming stadium is so far along that as soon as the frosts are over next spring it can be completed. Olympic preparation is also going on in the city. Old houses are being tom down and new structures in modern style are being erected. Streets are being widened, obstacles removed, parks laid out, and one notices on every side the firm determination not only to fulfil the technical demands for multitudes of people but also to present the city in all of its beauty and magnificence.

One fact stands out clearly even today, namely that a small nation and a city which compared with the major cities of the world must be classed as a middle-sized town are able to organize and finance an Olympic Festival without undue hardship. I should like to deny most emphatically that the Helsinki Festival will be an event from which those who are sympathetically inclined may expect a reasonable success, or that if one is tolerant and takes into consideration the brief period available for preparation, as well as the fact the Finns are a small nation, one may expect to be satisfied. On the contrary, visitors need not curb their expectations, for the Finns will fulfil their task in an admirable manner. The success of an Olympic Festival does not depend on the size of the city presenting it, nor upon unlimited funds. The required sums can also be provided by a small nation if it is determined and takes up its task with the devotion and passion which is today noticeable in Finland. The work of preparation is progressing with methodical determination and is being followed with sympathetic interest 'by the entire world. In contrast to former Games, the Festival of 1940 in Helsinki does not find a single dissenting voice among the sporting nations.

We are all looking forward to the approaching Festival in the conviction that we shall enjoy a technically complete event and which will reflect the beauty of northern nature as well as the artistic spirit of the Finnish people.

Carl Diem.

## Lehren der „Lingiade“

Von Carl Diem

„Fest der Völker.“ Die olympischen Tage von Stockholm 1912 stiegen auf: wieder erschollen Fanfaren, wieder marschierten die Abgesandten der Völker, kräftige gestählte Jugend, ins burgenartige Stockholmer Stadion. Nach mehr als einem Vierteljahrhundert wiederholte sich das festliche Schauspiel, und derselbe König, damals ein rüstiger Mann, heute ein nicht weniger rüstiger Greis, dessen aufrechte Haltung, dessen heller Blick, dessen vorbildliche Sportlichkeit von der Welt bewundert wird, eröffnete das Fest. Sind es inzwischen bei Olympischen Spielen an die fünfzig Nationen geworden, die jedesmal ins Stadion einrücken, so waren es diesmal in Stockholm an die dreißig. Doch lag in diesem Aufzug etwas Besonderes. Bei den Olympischen Spielen sind die einrückenden Mannschaften bunt gewürfelt; sie tragen zwar länderweise gleiche Kleidung, aber Gestalt und Kopf sind durch die Verschiedenheit der Sportarten verschieden geprägt. Diesmal waren es lauter „Gymnasten“, um den in Schweden üblichen Ausdruck zu wählen, oder Turner, wie wir sagen. Sie hatten alle die Einheitlichkeit planmäßiger Körperschule und den gewissen Adel der Haltung, den diese verleiht. „Gymnasten“ sind eine gute Auslese nicht nur körperlicher Art. Wer sich dieser Kunst ergibt, hat die