

Speech of M. Carl Albert Andersson, President of the Town Council of Stockholm, pronounced at the dinner given by the town of Stockholm in the City Hall.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight, it is my great pleasure to welcome to the Stockholm Town Hall the leaders of International Sports. Our Town Hall was built after the Olympic Games in 1912, and this is accordingly the first occasion on which the City has had the honour of welcoming Olympic guests here.

My welcome is in the first place addressed to the members of the International Olympic Committee and to the representatives of the International Sports Federations. A special municipal greeting is directed to the several city representatives who have come here

in noble emulation to compete for the favour of the International Olympic Committee with a view to securing for their respective cities the honour and glory of arranging the next Olympic Games.

This time Stockholm is not entering the lists. Our sister city of Helsingfors is one of the candidates for arranging the 1952 Olympic Games, and we Swedes would rather not stand in her way. As yet, no uninitiated people know what you, gentlemen of the International Olympic Committee, will decide. May I, however, and I beg the gentlemen from America to excuse me, presume to express a hope that war-devastated Europe will not be compelled to bear the heavy financial burden consequent on a decision to hold the games in another Continent.

I am, however, deeply conscious of the importance, indeed the glory, to any city appointed to arrange these noble contests for the young generations, to be the place where — after the terrible struggles of the war — the youth of the world will meet to measure its strength, both individually and nationally, in peaceful sports.

The Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912 left deep traces in our athletic circles. The newly constructed Stadium had provided the capital with a centre for various sports. Owing to the rapid growth of the city and the greatly increasing popularity of sports, however, the Stadium soon proved too small. The Olympic Games in 1912 had moreover — to some extent because of the Swedish successes in the Games — given a strong forward impulse to the idea of

"sports for all," to an appreciation of the necessity of exercise and physical training for everybody. This very greatly influenced Stockholm as well as the country in general. Sweden may be a small country as far as her population is concerned, with a capital of corresponding magnitude, but her young generation has taken up sports and athletics with ardent interest. Many of them are undoubtedly hoping that some day they might wear the colours of their country in the Olympic arena. Even though Stockholm is not this time seeking the honour of holding the Olympic Games, many of us would without hesitation joyfully accept the task of acting as their hosts. And all we Swedes are hoping to see the day when Stockholm is once more the Olympic City.

Ever since the days of antiquity, the most proficient, first, and best participant was proclaimed the winner in Olympic Games, which has found a happy expression in the old English saying: "May the best man win." May I be allowed to ask a simple question: Will the Rules and Regulations really ensure this? Is it really possible that the best man will always win?

I know that this is heresy, and the question should perhaps not have been asked by the Chairman of the Stockholm City Council, but I venture to ask it as a man interested in and practising sports. If for a moment I were allowed to disregard my position as host here tonight, I would like to express my regret that the amateur question, and everything connected with it from an international point of view, has not yet been definitely solved. A man's social position and income should not be allowed to affect his possibilities of competing as the representative of his country; a high moral in sports should forbid every form of masked compensation to competitors.

In international competitions there will necessarily always be a trace of national propaganda, and they are, perhaps for that very reason, easily led—or misled. The Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 gave us a deterrent example of the latter. I will not give vent to any criticisms here, but only wish to emphasize the weight of the responsibility resting today on the leaders of international sport for the promotion of morality in athletics.

Performers in the arena are today divided into two groups: amateurs and professionals. The border line is not always that of objective truth: openness and frankness are not always the criteria on which we judge the artists of sports and athletics. Discussions may tend to become factitious as long as we do not accept the consequences of the public demands on star performers. A new order is in process of developing, and the final solution is unfortunately delayed.

Sports and athletics express the inherent desire of man to measure his strength with that of his fellow men. They have become national movements of enormous dimensions. Nothing will attract the interest of the rising generation as much as sport in any form. In the days of antiquity young men were admired for their good sense, suppleness, and strength. Today we have, and have had for centuries, the longing of young people for peaceful achievements. In these achievements, as in the days of antiquity, thought, will, and body cooperate; the joy of contest, the tension, and the concentration required in it, give rise to a sense of wellbeing culminating with the performance. Sport and athletics develop a man, create a team-spirit in his club, give pleasure to

himself and his friends, and make him a stimulating example to the spectators.

Let me once more assure you how pleased and gratified the city of Stockholm is to see as its guests tonight so many of those responsible for the progress of sports and athletics. You will spend these days in writing chapters significant to the immediate future and, as I hope, peaceful, history of youth. It is my sincere hope that your deliberations and decisions will benefit the lofty goal you have set yourselves. I also hope that this bringing together of the foremost and best representatives of sports and physical training will assist in removing international sources of friction and proceed, past any false chauvinism, towards an international understanding which—irrespective of frontiers, races, and nations—will ultimately attain our highest and most significant object: Man himself.

Such is my hope—nay, my conviction—and that is what I wish our guests today. I give you the toast: Our guests, and the ideal you have all adopted—the Olympic!

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