

AFTER THE LONDON GAMES

Following lines, written by M. J. Sigfrid Edstrom, will appear in the official report of the London Olympic Games 1948 which will be issued by « World Sports » on behalf of the British Olympic Committee.

The staging of the Olympic Games in London this summer was recognised as the most crucial occasion in the history of sport. If it succeeded, sport would be well and truly launched in the post-war world. If it failed, there was on international bond the less in a world which needed every link of friendship.

Well, the great test has been taken ; and the organisation rose gloriously to the supreme challenge. The visitors were housed and fed ; the athletes were made at home in camps where every care was taken of their waking and sleeping hours. There were extra blankets and special stoves for those who came from hot climates. There were chefs to prepare meals never before cooked in London for men and women from the far places of the world.

There were swimming pools, gymnasiums and sportsgrounds for every athlete from



R. Cochran (U.S.A.) vainqueur des 400 m. haies en 51.1 sec.

How could such a project in the Grand Manner be accomplished in the threadbare and impoverished world of 1948 ?

It was a challenge to the British genius for improvisation. When the last of the pre-war Games took place, Berlin produced its Olympic Stadium with its Olympic Village as the climax of years of planning on a national scale. In 1948, Britain had to stage them in a city afflicted with an unparalleled housing shortage. Tens of thousands of foreign visitors, not to mention 6.000 athletes, had to be found homes.

Iceland to Korea to train on till the call came to report at Wembley. And there the great Stadium was in full readiness, surpassing in magnificence and convenience any homes the Games have had yet. Day after day the greatest sporting crowds of all time assembled and dispersed without undue congestion, a tribute to that master stroke of planning, the Olympic Way, the new road built for the occasion from the main station to the Stadium.

All the other Venues were organised and fitted in a way which made the spectators,

as well as the athletes very pleased. I visited Torquay, and to my great delight I found the port much nicer than Nice. The port was full of flags, yachts, men-of-war and other ships, a pleasure to the eye. At Henley, the old days of years gone by had returned. The stalls were full of enthusiastic spectators, and the technical arrangements were splendid. At Aldershot and Sandhurst the competitions went on in the most friendly way.

During my visits to the sporting grounds and the Olympic villages, I found the most amiable and courageous spirit. The young athletes met in comradeship and exchanged views and made ties of friendship, which I am sure will remain all their lives, and will perhaps, when these boys become leaders of their nations, help to create the brotherhood of men which is so necessary for the peace of the world.

So the Games went on smoothly and splendidly from a brilliant opening to a majestic and moving end. When 85.000 spectatore at the closing ceremony sang together « Let us be glad » written by Sir Alan Herbert (tuns Londonderry air)... my eyes were filled with tears and I was not alone. The first great international holiday for a decade has come and gone — an unqualified success.

On behalf of the International Olympic Committee and all participants at the Games I sag a hearts « Thank you » to Britain.

I congratulate the organisers on their triumph, and the British Olympic Association for producing so complete a record of these memorable events.

J. Sigfrid EDSTROM.

President

International Olympic Committee.

London, 16th August, 1948.
