

Mr. J.-S. EDSTRØM SPEECH

at the I. O. C. Meeting in Rome, April 1949

The International Olympic Committee has met in this city and this wonderful old building once before. It was the 7th of April 1923. Our founder Pierre de Coubertin was then president and in his opening speech he pronounced that the best way to celebrate an illustrious past was to let its learning inspire the formation of the future. He referred to the history of the Roman people and the persistence with which they conquered all resistance. He spoke of the future of the Olympic movement and how to reach the goal we are aiming for.

To day when we look back upon the quarter of a century that has passed since we last met here we must ask ourselves if we have succeeded. De Coubertin had experienced one world war. He could not imagine that a second

still more terrible war than the first one would follow.

The hindrances we have met in our work have been great. I am glad, however, to be able to state that in spite of all difficulties our work has progressed. The interest of the youth all over the world in our Olympic movement is increasing more and more. The Olympic Games in London 1948 have shown this. And to-day in this very city six prominent cities in various parts of the world have sent delegations asking for the right to hold the Games 1956.

The Far Eastern Games as well as the Pan American Games that de Coubertin also spoke of 1923 are contemplating to carry on. The International Sports Federations are growing in strength and support our movement,

and the National Olympic Committees are getting better organised. The motto that de Coubertin mentioned in his speech 26 years ago still remains. It said : « All sports for all ». We will do our best to support all sports but they cannot all be part of the Olympic Games. We must rather diminish our programme in order for smaller nations to be able to organise coming Olympic Games.

The aim of the Olympic Movement is to bring out a better human race, superior not only physicaly but also as regards nobleness of mind, and to contribute to a better understanding and friendship among the people. This is necessary, especially for the youth, to counterbalance the bad influence of industrialism. The renewal of the ancient Olympic

Games and their adaption to modern times is the means this movement has chosen in order to reach its high aspirations. The Games bring forth an interest among the youth to practise sport and gives the athletes an opportunity to measure their strength, their speed and their ability with other young men and women of other nations.

I use this occasion to express our heartfelt thanks to the Authorities of the City of Rome as well as to the Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano for the kind invitation to hold this year's Olympic Meeting here in Rome. The best work is always done when one feels at home. Well, we feel at home here. I am sure we will succeed.





