

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY

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Whether or not international sport promotes international friendship, there is no doubt that international events of the quality of the Olympic Games inspire young people to emulate their Olympic heroes and take up some form of sporting activity. Reports received during the past year from sports organisations concerned with the Olympic movement in nearly every country tell of the vast increase in club membership as a direct result of the XIV Olympiad. This in itself is surely an international achievement of major importance, for it means that a larger proportion of young people throughout the world are taking part in physical recreation. Some countries, appreciating the fact that youngsters who are actively engaged in games and sports are more likely to become healthy and useful citizens, have devised ways of raising funds to provide increased facilities and better coaching. Can we look forward to the time when the authorities in every country will follow their example?

Like 1948, this has been another eventful year in the sphere of international sport and physical education. During July, an International Congress of Physical Education for Girls and Women was held in Copenhagen an 250 delegates from 26 countries attended. The aim of the Congress, sponsored by the National Association of Physical Education for College Women in co-operation with Madam Bertram and other officials of Copenhagen University, was to exchange information through lectures, films, displays of photographs and publications, and to discuss further means of international co-operation. Under the chairmanship of Miss Dorothy Ainsworth, U. S. A., the Congress more than achieved its purpose, and the resolutions put forward should have far-reaching results.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was when official delegates and gymnastic teams from some 80 countries gathered together in Stockholm for the 1949 Lingiad. This magnificent festival is aptly described elsewhere so there is no need to say more here. Because all countries have so much to learn from each other we must not under-estimate the value of international gatherings of this nature, which present a unique opportunity for delegates to discuss their problems and to pass on results of experimental work. It is as well to remember, too, that the value and success of international meetings should not be judged solely on the merits of the organised programme but on the results of the numerous informal discussions. Gratitude is due to the organisers for affording us the opportunity of meeting delegates from many lands.

Taking advantage of their visit to Stockholm, senior officials of the C. C. P. R. went to see the sport institute at Bosön, the national physical recreation centre for Sweden. They were greatly impressed by the facilities, which include indoor an dopen-air swimming pools, a small harbour where sailing boats were moored, a large gymnasium 210 feet by 90 feet, a fully equipped athletics arena, two sets of Finnish baths, and a tennis court and a golf course in the vicinity. The centre is surrounded by some six square miles of wooded countryside, which is used extensively for the popular Swedish sport of „orienteeing”. Although grant-aided by the Swedish Government, the warden, Mr. Lindberg, maintained that the centre was almost self supporting. The students are nominated from each province of Sweden by the appropriate governing body of sport. In addition to training courses, the center is used for the pre-match preparation of the Swedish international teams, and it was here that the Swedish footballers received their intensive preparation for their successful match against England last season.

At the invitation of the Principal, Mr. Neils Bukh, a party of English leaders under the direction of Miss E. Scott and Miss I. Price of the C. C. P. R.'s North Eastern Region, attended a summer school at the Gymnastics high School of Ollerup, Denmark, where they met leaders from a number of countries. They were greatly impressed with the course the facilities and the warm welcome they received.

Mention is appropriate here of the gallant attempts which have been made recently by swimmers from many countries to swim the English Channel. Their grit, determination and courage are a shining example to the sport in which they serve. Congratulations on their success are offered to the youthful Phillip Mickman of Great Britain, to Fernand du Moulin, the first Belgian to swim the Channel, and to the others who have accomplished the feat during the summer.