

## **Speech of Mr. J. Sigfrid Edström**

*President of the International Olympic Committee*

Mr. Bundeskanzler,  
Mr. President of the Austrian Olympic Committee,  
Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the International Olympic Committee and on behalf of the representatives for the International Sports organisations gathered here I have the honour to extend to you all and particularly to the Austrian Olympic Committee our thanks for the kind invitation to have this year's meeting of the International Olympic Committee in Vienna. We thank you for the kind reception you have given us and for the splendid arrangements, that you have organized in our honour. Many of us remember well the nice time we had in June 1933, when the first Olympic meeting was held in this city. It is as Dr. Gerö just has pointed out: Nobody knew in the good year of 1933 that such terrible catastrophes would trouble the world. Here in this city you have

suffered much and we your friends in all parts of the world have with interest watched your brave fight for freedom and independence. Dr. Gerö has pointed out that the Olympic movement is also striving for peace. Unfortunately the youth, that is working with us, can only demonstrate for peace through their mind and their actions. They have no weapons used in modern warfare, but they have a clear mind and sound bodies. I feel certain that one day they will strongly help the world in good strivings for a permanent peace. Dr. Gerö spoke of interest, that prevail in this country for the Olympic Games and how the number of participants from your country in the games has grown every Olympiad. This was one of the reasons why the International Olympic Committee decided to have its meeting in this old capital of Austria. We wanted to personally learn to know the leaders of the sport here and also the supporters of the Olympic movement.

The first time I personally met Austrian athletes was at the Olympic Games in Athens 1906. The Swedish team travelled together with the Austrian team on a boat from Trieste to Piræus and of course our boys had preliminary competitions on board. We greatly admired your heavy weight lifter Steinbach. Then again I met Austrian athletes at the Olympic Games in London 1908 and in Stockholm 1912. Fürst Otto zu Windisch-Graetz was then a member of the International Olympic Committee and I met him often. I cannot refrain from also mentioning the name Hermann Wraschtil. I was in hopes that I should have the joy to meet Hermann Wraschtil during this meeting, but unfortunately he has now passed on. When I met these men I felt that the Austrian nation would be a good participant in the Olympic movement, something which has certainly become true.

Our meeting this week in Vienna is of great importance. We will prepare for the Olympic Games 1952 and also for 1956. Important questions concerning the summer games in Helsinki and the Winter Games in Oslo 1952 will be studied and settled. Report for the preparations in Melbourne 1956 as well as the Winter Games in Cortina the same year will be put before us, for preliminary decisions.

We members of the International Olympic Committee and our ladies like the program you have prepared for us and are looking forward to a pleasant week in your city. Of old we know the happy mood of the Vienna people and we hope that some of it is still left, in spite of all the troubles of war and starvation, that you have gone through.

Mr. Bundeskanzler, Dr. Gerö and Members of the Austrian Olympic Committee, once more we thank you for all you have done for us.