
Discours de M. Arthur Ruud

président du Comité olympique norvégien.

Your Royal Highness, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour and a pleasure to the Norwegian Olympic Committee to welcome His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Olav to the formal opening of the I. O. C.'s meeting in Oslo. We are proud that His Royal Highness, who himself holds an Olympic Gold Medal, is present today to add lustre to the occasion.

I also extend, on behalf of the Norwegian Committee, a warm welcome to the members of the I. O. C., to the Presidents of the National Committees and to the Representatives of the International Federations.

Compared with the Summer Games and their age-old traditions, the Winter Games are mere babes in-arms, for it was not until the 1920's that the idea of holding them was first raised. Indeed, the International Olympic Committee was in some doubt in the beginning about the advisability of the project, but finally decided to authorise a trial meeting in France, at Chamonix, in 1924. On that occasion 293 competitors, representing 16 nations, took part. The experiment was a success and the

meeting was officially recognised as the First Olympic Winter Games.

Since then, four other Winter Games have been held — at Sankt Moritz in 1928, at Lake Placid in 1932, at Garmish Partenkirchen in 1936 and again at Sankt Moritz in 1948. Now, the Vith Winter Games are about to open in Oslo with 900 competitors representing 30 nations. We hope that these numbers, the highest so far, are a good omen for success.

In Norway, sport is an essential part of the life of her people. Some 15 % of the entire population are active members of the Norwegian National Sports Association, which not only embraces all sports practised in Norway, but foster and organises sport in industry, as well as health control and cultural activities. In this connexion I would like, with your permission, to quote a paragraph from the Association's constitution which illustrates its scope and aims:

« The aims of the Association shall be to guide and foster the nation's sport in order that it may play its part in the task of improving the health of

the people and the standard of their spiritual and physical culture. »

These aims, I suggest, have much in common with the spirit in which the Olympic Games were conceived.

The Norwegian Olympic Committee is composed of the Committee of the National Association with the addition of one or two representatives of each of the sports which form part of the Olympic Summer and Winter Games. It is, therefore, a national committee in every sense of the word.

As I have said, sport is an integral part of our nation's daily life and this is especially true of Winter sports. Indeed, it is sometime said that Norwegian children are born with skis on their feet. How true this assertion is, I am not sure, but there is no doubt that winter sports have a long tradition amongst us and an ever-present popularity throughout the land. It is therefore only natural that Norwegians should have a special interest in the Winter Olympics. They have prepared for them all, eagerly yet with patience, and the entire population has followed with pride and with the motto of the Games in mind — CITIUS, ALTIUS, FORTIUS — the fortunes of the Norwegian representatives since the first Games were held in Chamonix. It is consequently not difficult to understand the joy which greeted the International Committee's decision to honour Oslo by making it the centre for the 1952 Games. And it is equally natural that this joy should be accompanied by a deep sense of responsibility, for Oslo is itself a winter sports city and has traditions to maintain. We hope therefore that the VIth Olympic Winter Games will prove themselves worthy to take their place alongside the five that have gone before.

May I once again, Mr. President, on behalf of the Norwegian Olympic Committee, wish you and your fellow-members warmly welcome to Oslo. We had the honour and pleasure to act as hosts to the International Committee when it met here in 1935. We trust that the present meeting will prove to be no less successful and that all who have come to Norway to take part will find their stay a happy one. We hope, too, that when the time comes for them to leave us, they will, do so with the pleasantest of memories and with many new friends.