

The preolympic medals have been awarded to the laureates on the 18th of February 1955

The ceremony of the distribution of the Preolympic Medals awarded for the year 1954 by the French Olympic Committee to the Laureates, took place officially in the course of a cocktail-party held on the 18th of last February in the presence of Mr. Gaston Roux, General Director of sports. The reception was also attended by numerous well known personalities of the sporting world.

On this occasion, Mr. Armand Massard, President of the French Olympic Committee and Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee made the following speech :

"Barely a year ago, we foregathered in this very place for the distribution of the first Preolympic Medals created by the French Olympic Committee.

Today these awards of merit are going to be bestowed on the young competitors who, in the course of last year, have distinguished themselves by their qualities of competency and merit. These medals are not a mere reward but are an encouragement for competitors to exert themselves and redouble their efforts.

These Medals as I have said it last year, and I excuse myself for reasserting it again, aim chiefly at reminding everybody, officials Directive Powers of Federations and Associations as well as athletes belonging to every category of sport, of the periodical recurrence every four year, of the great world confrontation as we find it in the Olympic Games.

We know well and we are able to appreciate at its true value the wide and far reaching repercussion of other large and important international competitions which are increasing in number and in importance as sport extends its field of conquests.

But the Olympic Games retain their universal character which is unrivalled up to now. Doubtless this is due to Pierre de Coubertin who wanted them to be the only Games creating an unusual atmosphere, where the effort in sport finds its expression beyond the passing of thousand of years and which is linked up with the great greek-latin tradition of humanity, the genesis of our civilization.

We have cause to be very proud, we Frenchmen, that the Modern Olympic Games are the conception of one of our compatriots : Baron Pierre de *Coubertin*. But to us incumb also the duty, more than to any other nations, of watching over the inheritance he has left to the World and to do our utmost within our own sphere to maintain and develop his immense work. Unfortunately we do not always possess the means indispensable for the realization of this

plan which other countries may carry out more successfully than ourselves.

During the periodical cycle of four years of an olympiad, our Directive Powers and our athletes must bear in mind the fact that they must work and train not only for the actual season or for the season to come. but also to prepare themselves for the next Games, steeped in this spirit of loyalty and disinterestedness which exhale from the teachings handed us down by Pierre de Coubertin.

There lies the meaning of these medals which are about to be distributed.

The choice of the Laureates has been carried out methodically and with the utmost probity.

It has proved sometimes an arduous task, but the members of the Commission of the F.O.C. who assumed this responsibility, took it to heart to observe strictly the principles which have been put into force and accepted once for all in 1953. I quote the following :

"The Medals are meant to favour prospect- ion among the young elements capable of representing France honourably on the occasion of the forthcoming Olympic Games.

"They cannot be given to athletes who have already been chosen to compete in former Olympic Games.

"The Medals must be attributed to competitors whose age gives one to believe that they will be attaining the peak of their form at the time of the Games."

These are the Rules applied in their strict sense which have been inspiring the choice and selection of the Commission of the F.O.C. It is thanks to this strict and somewhat severe selection that the Medals will retain all their significance.

May the rejected candidates feel no resentment or bitterness. There is still the next season for them in which they can show what they are capable of achieving. It is my wish that next year, many candidates may receive these medals, thus confirming the fact that they are fit subjects to defend honourably the French colours next year at Cortina d'Ampezzo, in Stockholm and Melbourne.

Presently, our General Secretary is going to read the list of the Laureates and give their titles,

But previously to this, I wish to thank heartily all those who honoured us by replying in such a friendly way to our invitation, their presence confers a higher value to the awards which are about to be bestowed and enhances the efficacy of our work.

I therefore offer my best thanks to Colonel Gaston Roux, General Director of the Youth Movement and Director of sports for his effective support and constant as well as friendly solicitude.
To Colonel Desroys du Roure, our sympathetic governmental agent de liaison.

and I also wish to thank all my colleagues of the Olympic Committee, the Board of Directors of the Federations for their sense of fairness and moderation which they displayed in the presentation of the candidates in each of the disciplines which they govern with as much enthusiasm as integrity.
