

Echoes of the IInd Mediterranean Games

Barcelone, July 1955.

A few days after the 50th Session of the I. O. C., the Opening of the IInd Mediterranean Games took place at Barcelona. They illustrated the Olympic ideal triumphing amongst the countries surrounding the "Mare Nostrum." from where our civilization was originated. Greece is the cradle of Olympism, it is from her that we inherited our olympic ideal. The Mediterranean Games were inspired by the spirit of Elis which moved and will go on moving youth throughout the world. The prestige of these memorable days at Barcelona, was enhanced by the presence of several members of the I. O. C., amongst whom, we at Barcelona cannot forget Mr. Armand Massard, Vice-President, who, besides presiding at the Games, was deputizing for Mr Avery Brundage, President of the I. O. C. In addition, the following members were present : H. E. Mohammed Taher, member of the Executive Board, Mr François Piétri, Mr Angelo Bolanaki, Mr Jean Ketseas, Cheik Gabriel Gemayel, Ahmed E. H. Jaffer, Mr Pedro Ibarra Mac Mahon, and the President of the Olympic Committee for Spain, General Moscardo.

Without altering the essentials of the Olympic protocol, we esteem that the IInd Mediterranean Games brought out a new symbol and were a brilliant achievement. They commenced at the Greek Stadium of Ampurias, situated on the north coast of Spain, where in ancient times, the Greeks contemporary to Hercules, originally landed in the Iberian peninsula. The Olympic Flame used in more important celebrations, was replaced at these Games by a silver amphora containing Mediterranean water, in the ancient port of Ampurias built by the Greeks in the IVth Century B. C. This amphora was placed for one night in the ancient Greek amphitheatre of that town. A relay of runners transported the liquid symbol to the Municipal Stadium of Montjuich where the last athlete timed its arrival with the Opening of the Games. When the last carrier of the amphora poured its contents into the fountain, placed at the Marathon's Gate, the fountain came into play, flowing steadily on during night and day till sunset on July 25th, the closing day of the IInd Mediterranean Games. The flow was

gradually stopped while the Olympic Hymn was heard, it was the first time that it was played during a sports manifestation and at the same time, the flags were lowered from the poles in the Stadium. This moving ceremony terminated these memorable days.

It is not my intention to comment on the technical results of the IInd Mediterranean Games. Suffice it to mention that these International Championships were not held with a view to break records or to achieve results with an idea of rivalry. It was an

educational manifestation, rallying peoples as in ancient times, around the shrine of youth, and whose success can be measured by the influence a co-operative mind can have on their consciences. These were days filled with history, art, philosophy and beauty.

Repeating a sentence pronounced by the great Reviver of the Games. I can affirm that at the Mediterranean Games, the important thing was not to win but to have the honour to participate in them.

Juan Antonio Samaranch.