

The Nature of the Work undertaken by the I. O. C.

By *Pierre de Coubertin* (Bulletin N° 2, 1894)

Our idea in reviving an institution which had disappeared for hundreds of years, is the following : Athletics has assumed an importance growing from year to year. The part it is playing in modern times seems as durable and outstanding as it was in ancient times. Moreover, it has come back under new aspects : sport has become international and democratic, thus it answers the conceptions and needs of our present times. But nowadays as it happened in former days, its influence will be good or evil according to the use it is made use of, and the direction it is

incited to take. Athletics can rouse the noblest and the vilest instincts in men, it can provoke sentiments of unselfishness and honour, as well as love of profit, it can be chivalrous or corrupt, virile or bestial. Moreover, it can be an instrument to strengthen peace as well as prepare the way for war. Now, noble-mindedness derives from disinterestedness and a sense of honour, a chivalrous spirit and virile energy and a desire for peace constitute the first essentials needed by modern democracies be they republican or monarchic.