

Should the Judges and Referees be sworn in at the Olympic Games ?

Those who attended the Conference of the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee with the Delegates of the International Federations in Paris in June 1955, will remember the discussion which took place there concerning the moral and technical qualities of the referees and judges who are functioning at the Olympic Games. This matter had already been raised in 1954, when the improvement of the standard of judging at the Olympic Games came under discussion. Many criticisms have been voiced in the past and since then many difficulties have arisen. There are many international federations, as we have learned, who have systems which are giving full satisfaction. This is the case with the Federations of Rowing (President Mr. Gaston Mulleg) and Football (1st Vice-President Mr. Drewry) who possess their own schools in some form or other, or else hold annual courses. Only those who obtain an international licence from these courses are eligible as judges and referees. Naturally this licence is only awarded to a judge after he has passed an examination before a jury composed of three members. (Rowing.)

The International Equestrian Federation (Ex-President Baron de Trannoy) must supply three judges per year, chosen from the candidates who have attended two courses ; they will be trained especially for the judging of dressage trials. The International Ice-Hockey Federation (European President Mr. Ahearne) holds its own courses and invites those who, in their turn, are most capable of teaching the interpretation of the rules to candidates — referees of their own countries.

The International Athletics Federation (President, Lord Burghley) views the thorny question of the judging of the athletics contests from another angle. The conclusion to be drawn is a question of a "judgement of facts" not of expressing an opinion. I.A.A.F. observed that, at the Games prior to those held in 1948, hundreds of officials from different countries took part in addition to the international judges. The difficulty

arises out of this fact particularly, since the many of those who concern themselves with these problems have no real understanding. As long as these officials are chosen in different countries, the assurance of uniformity of conduct and of a definite standard of quality and competence is an impossibility. This Federation has attempted, therefore, to establish certain criteria in order to regulate conduct and to indicate the interpretations which should be given to the rules. Courses have been organized on a regional basis and in this way, it was possible to form an excellent team made up of men who were accustomed to work together and had got to know one another. This system of having judges from the same country was adopted at Helsinki and will be retained also at Melbourne.

It is an unfortunate fact that National Federations bring pressure to bear on less strictly organized Federations than those we have mentioned, in order to obtain the nomination of certain persons as judges who are in no way qualified to carry out their functions. This is a most delicate question, and we should recall, as President Brundage very rightly pointed to us, that in the ancient Games, the position of judge was considered as important as that of the athlete himself. Thus we never attach sufficient importance to the qualifications and the competence of judges and referees. We should remember certain *scandalous cases* (declaration of Mr. von Frenckell, President of the Games), which arose in the course of the Games at Helsinki in 1952, when certain individual who were registered as judges, were in fact no more than mere tourists. Strict control must be established and carried out by the International Federations which, in any case, are well aware of this. The words of Mr. Bonet-Maury of the International Judo Federation (?) are worth calling to mind. This spokesman said in Paris, that it is necessary to select persons who have not merely the required technical experience but who possess also *moral integrity*. This moral value cannot be given a general definition but it is always linked with experience, for with age,

the passions die gradually away and one comes to make impersonal judgements and appeal to experienced persons.

Returning to the International Rowing Federation, let us recall the opinion expressed by its President Mr. Mullegg. "We cannot, for example have any Australian judge for the Olympic Games at Melbourne, this is not because there are none in Australia who possess the necessary standing required in Australia, but because there are none who hold an international licence. As far as we are concerned we rate the members of the Jury as being above everything else and I am also of the opinion that the moral value of a judge is just as important as his technical knowledge."

The International Amateur *Boxing* Association was represented in Paris "by its President, Mr. Emile Gremaux and by its Secretary, the Hon. R. H. Russell, of France and Great Britain respectively. If there is any sport in which a high degree of competence and *impartiality* is necessary it is in boxing. It was therefore of the greatest interest to hear the views of Mr. Gremaux, of which we are giving the following brief summary : "We are well aware, said the speaker that certain difficulties arose at the Games in Helsinki during the judging of the boxing contests. Unfortunately, the same conditions do not appertain in boxing as they do in other sports where there is the tape or the chronometer. In boxing everything depends upon human appreciation. There is nothing in the rules which states that a boxer has won for such and such a reason. Although our rules are drawn in three languages; the crux of the matter is that what the national federations send to the Games are... men! These men have, according to their national federations, a high degree of competence. Often, however, from the outset of the contests, it becomes obvious that these men are not so much good judges as travellers attached to these federations. In boxing the formation of schools for judges and referees is an impossibility, since there are still such differences of appreciation between the various countries. There are judges who still regard boxing as it was in the days of coaches ! But there is now a difference in style, since we move now in the epoch of jet aircraft. We should consider the different styles existing in the world at the present time. For example, I might mention the U.S.A. style, the Anglo-Saxon style, that belonging to the Eastern countries, Poland, Hungary, the U.S.S.R., and also the latin style. It is the existence of these styles that bring about such difficulties. A certain boxer who is appreciated by a certain judge, will not find favour with another who has a different conception of boxing."

The International Shooting Federation was represented by Mr. Larsson of Sweden, who advocated an examination for all

candidate-judges and referees for the Olympic Games, a scheme which, in our opinion would prove too long to put into practice and too much of a burden for the federations.

In view of all that has been previously said, which has been merely summarized by us, Mr. Armand Massard, Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee *raised the question* of the advisability of causing the judges and referees who wish to officiate at the Olympic Games, to take the same olympic oath as that required of the athletes. This would, in fact be a moral oath which they would be required to take at their investiture with the qualification of judge. Mr. Armand Massard said in support of his argument that among sportsmen, an oath which is an oath of honour is binding for the man who takes it. It is of interest to note that the delegates of the federations who attended this Conference, in the full awareness of their responsibility and with a clear realisation that the moral aspect of the referee is as important as his technical knowledge, not only approved Mr. Massard's proposition but *applauded it*.

As a result of imparting this idea to a United Press reporter in Paris, Mr. A. Massard became the object of the criticism of Mr. Serge Lang (Gazette de Lausanne of 15. 11. 55.) in an article whose title and text appear below.

Editorial Statement

We wish to point out from the outset that this is not a question of an invention by the International Olympic Committee nor of *any decision* taken by the latter. This *suggestion*, for it was no more than an idea expressed by Mr. Massard, and approved unanimously by the International Federations present at the Conference, has *not yet been laid before the International Olympic Committee*.

The latest Invention of the International Olympic Committee

(By Serge Lang)

From Paris comes a fantastic new tale. Mr. Armand Massard, Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee, has just declared that in the course of its sittings in June, the International Olympic Committee made a secret decision to require an "Oath of impartiality" from the judges and referees of the next Olympic Games !

Mr. Massard defends his decision in view of the risk of certain judges giving verdicts tainted by jingoistic sentiments. The text of the oath which will be taken at Cortina and Melbourne is not known to us, but the words are of little importance since their meaning is : "I promise not to cheat..." Were I a referee and had I, consequently taken an oath of impartiality at the beginning of my career, I would refuse to take an oath by which I would make an implicit admission of the fallibility of sport.

I was present at the Winter Games at both St-Moritz and Oslo. I saw referees make mistakes, but never once was it a question of bad faith. Perhaps, however, jingoism has made such frightening progress in sport during the last four years that the International Olympic Committee considers its precaution to be absolutely necessary. If this were really the case, an oath of impartiality would be a very weak measure with which to face the seriousness of the situation. In that case it should not be the referees who should be made to take an oath. Let us rather discontinue the contests which are the cause of such jingoism. Luckily we have not yet come to such a pass. In any case, I suppose that this business of the oath of impartiality has been aggravated more so by the thirst for decorum of the gentlemen of the International Olympic Committee. Until now, we already had the arrival of the Olympic Flame, next came the teams, each behind its flag, finally came the *pièce de résistance* : the Olympic oath by the athletes a favourite theme for the photographers. And that was as far as it went. But now we are to have yet another page in the programme : the oath by the referees. One of these days this will all end up with a ballet ! The Olympic Medals will be distributed just anyhow with some sort of "Eeny, meeny-miney-mo", and in this way the referees will become redundant and, if necessary, we could even do without the athletes !

Mr. S. Lang's article earned him the following reply from Mr. A. Massard, Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee (Gazette de Lausanne, publication of 8th December last) :

Mr. Serge Lang scoffs openly at the idea of an oath for judges and referees at the Olympic Games, an idea which he sees as inspired only by the thirst for decorum of the "Gentlemen of the International Olympic Committee." According to him, the extent of this decorum will end up by engulfing sport itself, as well as the referees and the competitors in the Olympic Games. He supports his views with his experience of the Winter Games at St-Moritz and Oslo.

I hope he will allow me to say that I find this experience somewhat limited. He might not be of the same opinion, had he followed the Summer Games and the Winter Games throughout the last fifty years. He would know then that cases have arisen, where, his colleagues have protested heatedly against certain really startling decisions. And apart from the Olympic Games, has he never heard of certain somewhat... inexplicable decisions ?

An oath does not mean very much ? That depends on who takes it. In France, Great Britain and the United States, many officials from the heads of the largest administrative departments down to the smallest civil servants are sworn into office. One must therefore assume that this ceremony is not

entirely superfluous. In the case of a judge who has a tendency towards a certain conscious or unconscious nationalism, might not the taking of a rather solemn oath before judging re-awaken him to the high conception of the responsibility with which he has been entrusted ? This would be enough to justify the institution of an oath for judges and referees.

As far as the decorum of the Games instituted by Baron Pierre de Coubertin. is concerned, it scarcely seems to me that their progress has been hindered by it. Their fame, I mean sportive fame of course, has never ceased to grow and to add to its glory for the last sixty years. Every four years, there is an increase in the number of the nations throughout the world who take part, whilst the technical results have always become more and more outstanding. The competitions have been followed both far and near by an ever wider and more enthusiastic public. Let Mr. Serge Lang rest assured that the health of the Olympic Games and their success are better than it has ever been. Finally, as a counter to these criticisms, may I, for once in the way as an organizer who has been long at the helm. remind this momentarily ill-inspired journalist : Mr. Serge Lang of the saying of a French philosopher who at least knew what he was talking about : "He who seeks to outshine his wit, loses what wit he has..."

Armand Massard.

Serge Lang's Reply

The statement of the distinguished Vice-President of the International Committee has not caused me to alter my opinion. I continue to hold the view that the oath of impartiality which it is proposed to require of the judges and referees at the Olympic Games is a useless measure. Indeed it is inadvisable. By adopting this measure the International Olympic Committee appears to admit that the atmosphere of the Games has become so impregnated with nationalistic tendencies that the judges and referees who officiate in them might reach the point of no longer respecting objective moral standards. Mr. Massard draws the comparison between the judges and referees and the civil servants who are sworn into office. This comparison serves only as a further argument in support of our contention. Civil servants take their oath at the time when they embark upon their careers. Now the judges and referees also made an implicit vow of impartiality once and for all at the moment when they took up *their sporting career*.

The Opinion of the I. G. F.

The International Gymnastics Federation has written us the following concerning the Jury operating within this sport :

“Before both the World Championships and the Olympic Games, those who are chosen to function as judges must attend an instructional course of three or four days duration which is to be held immediately before the opening of the contests. Attendance at this course is compulsory. In accordance with article 24 of the Rules, for many years now, our judges have had to give an undertaking before assuming their functions to carry out their responsibilities with the strictest regard for their conscience. This undertaking is given in the following formula :
“I SWEAR ON MY HONOUR THAT IN MY CAPACITY, AS JUDGE, I SHALL ALLOW MYSELF TO BE GUIDED ONLY IN THE SPIRIT OF THE LOYALTY AND DIGNITY OF TRUE SPORTSMANSHIP AND THAT I SHALL JUDGE THIS PRESENT CONTEST CONSCIENTIOUSLY, IRRESPECTIVE OF PERSONS OR NATIONS.”

This formal undertaking is given in the course of a short ceremony when the judges file past the President of the Jury with whom they shake hands. This ceremony also takes place on the occasion of the Olympic Games.

Ch. Thoeni, Gen. Secretary, Geneva.

(Thus it can be observed that the Interna-

tional Olympic Committee has not invented anything new in this matter ! Ed.)

A recognized Case of Partiality

Through the twelfth edition of the Official Bulletin of the International Equestrian Federation, the news reached us somewhat late of a flagrant case of partiality committed by judges. A complaint was lodged with the F.E.I. by the Argentine Equestrian Federation, shortly after the Pan-American Games which were celebrated at Mexico-City, in March 1955, with the view to report certain incidents which took place there. Among these are cited as (item 1 in the report) *the partiality of certain judges* and (item 4 quoted) the indisputable tendency practised there in order to favour *by all sorts of means* every member belonging to the team of the organizing nation. It is not our intention to go into every detail of the subsequent consideration given to this complaint. The Congress of the F.E.I. has approved of the decision taken by the Head Office to the effect that a sanction of blame was passed on the Mexican Federation, though its entire sincerity has been acknowledged, this federation will have to bear the consequences of its judges' actions.