

Sixty Years behind Time

An article recently published in the November issue of "Selection" (French edition) by Charles Bucher, Professor of physical culture, has been brought to our notice. Undoubtedly full of the best of intentions, the author of this article bemoans the disappearance of the sportsmanship

spirit from the Olympic contests. Certain of his remarks seem justified. Thus we agree with him when he declares that at the Olympic Games of Helsinki in 1952, it was the sports journalists who brought the cold war into the field of sport when they used point scoring as a headline to attract a larger

number of readers though these proceedings had already been used by a certain section of the press long before the Games in question. This *fanciful* notion is moreover not recognized by the International Olympic Committee which does not sanction the system of classification by nations at the Olympic Games, the latter being exclusively reserved for individual competitions. Nationalism which is the logical outcome of such classification ought to be banished from the Games. We do not share Mr. Bucher's opinion when he makes the following statement. "It is an acknowledged and well proven fact that the Russians pay their athletes and that they train them all day long throughout the year and that *they scoff at the Olympic ideal.*" WE WOULD LIKE MR. BUCHER GIVE US PROOFS TO SUPPORT SUCH ALLEGATIONS, but we expect that he would be at a loss to do so.

The author ends his article by advocating the following "golden rules" to be enforced in order that the Games of the XVIth Olympiad (1956) may reflect the genuine Greek tradition and its ideal :

— That all point-scoring systems be abolished.

— That the Games be kept free from all politics, governmental subsidies and all professionalism.

— That all the competitors be ready to act as ambassadors of goodwill among nations.

— That praise and publicity be awarded for excellency of individual performances, regardless of national origin.

In conclusion, the author goes on to say that if all the peoples of the world agreed to put these elementary principles into practice, the Olympic Games would soon regain their historic significance. We so completely agree with the views expressed by Mr. Bucher that , should he wish it, we shall willingly present him with a copy of the Olympic Rules in which his suggestions are expressed... ever since 1894! But it is a far cry to the universal and implicit observance of these laws !