

## Are all Judges impartial ?

In a recent issue of our Bulletin, we discussed at length the matter of judges, the questionable impartiality of some of them and lastly, we referred to the proposal made with regard to instituting an oath which judges should be enforced to take in Olympic matters. Very likely, some people may not agree on this last point, though, as we said before, this ceremony to swear in the judges takes place within certain federations already, for example, the International Gymnastics Federation. One of the objections raised against it was that conscious and deliberate partiality does not exist : that all judges in matters concerning sport were fair and upright. If this were the case, we think that they would not be human ! Alas we have a proof in hand to illustrate this, the case was signalled by the most important sports Daily of France in its publication of February 18th and 19th 1956. It relates an incident which took place in Garmisch-Partenkirchen last February, in connection with the Artistic Skating World Championship. Under the title "Recriminations are bound to be voiced in connection with the *partiality* of judges in the contests for couples", the editor of this newspaper wrote as follows : "I wish to revert to the point of the so-called victory of the Austrian couple : Sissy Schwartz - Kurt Opper. Yesterday, the French judge Rodrigues-Euriques who watched closely and impartially this competition, admitted to me that without a vestige of a doubt, the title of World Champions should have been won by the Canadian couple Dafoe-Bowden. Their skating was far superior in style and artistic value to the skating displayed by the Austrian couple. The latter, as a matter of fact, are only brilliant pupils whereas the Canadian couple are first class artists". In spite of this, the Viennese couple has been classed first and won by one hundredth of a point score thanks to "*the scheming of their compatriot, judge Franz Wojtanowski*". What steps is the International Skating Union

going to take against such a flagrant evidence of partiality of a judge ? Mr. Wojtanowski may be taken to task, but that measure, let it be said, will not alter in anyway the issue at hand. Better admit the possibility of arbitrary occurrences happening when we attend an international encounter. It is sad to admit, but the fact remains that it is so and this state of affairs is not likely to change."

We have no right of course to interfere with the internal affairs of an International Federation, and this all the more that this incident did not take place on the occasion of an Olympic competition but at a World Championship, an event which though of undoubted interest does not concern us directly. We cite this incident only to give it as an example of what may happen.

In this same train of thought, the Zurich newspaper "Sport" has published most interesting statistics. It gives the detailed account of the marks allocated by the judges in the jumping competitions at Cortina. This newspaper observed that each judge in question gave higher marks to the jumping competitors of his own country than did the rest of his colleagues. One judge only, the Norwegian, did not allow himself to be influenced by jingoistic sentiments. We are not surprised by this. It is only fair though to point out that in spite of all, these failings did not influence the classifying, as it is not to be questioned, the best athletes won the Olympic title. We were thus anxious to justify the attitude we adopted in our last issue of the Bulletin. We do not believe in the impartiality of ALL JUDGES and we are still sceptical when we are told that their integrity is beyond doubt.

The warning given at the Conference of the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee with the delegates of the International Federations in Paris, last June, was not therefore out of place nor was it an exaggeration.