

Is Pseudo-Amateurism affecting Yachting as well?

"If ever a sport seemed really immune of the lure of sham-amateurism so far, it has been yachting ! Moreover, this sport has gradually evolved on democratic lines more especially in the popular classes, namely in the ones where the boat's initial cost is not too high..." Those were the comments made by Mr. Gaston Meyer, Chief Editor of the Paris newspaper *l'Equipe*. But, generally speaking, yachters are usually well to do people as the yacht in itself is a rather costly item and to go in for yacht racing: calls for a certain time of leisure.

Mr. Jan Loeff, vice-president of the International Yacht Racing Union and the Hon-Secr. of the Dutch Yachting Federation expresses his fears with regard to a certain feeling of uneasiness which seems to affect this sport too, as far as amateurism is concerned. In the Dutch Review *De Waterkampioen* N° 978, Mr. Loeff wrote an article which has been reproduced in *Les cahiers du Yachting*, published in France, in which he made the following statement : "In the Finn Sailing Class, the Dutch helmsman Paul Elvström, Olympic Champion at Helsinki in 1952, did not compete in the World Championship and competed only partly in the Scandinavian Championship. He preferred racing at La Baule. And for what

reason ? The French organizers offered to the best "foreign competitors", a boat of that class fully equipped with sails. This offer was too tempting to resist and Paul Elvström succeeded in winning the boat. To my way of thinking, there is something very wrong indeed in this form of proceedings. I completely fail to appreciate how a helmsman of international reputation such as this famous Dane, can make light of two important Championships on the ground that he can draw a material profit by sailing elsewhere. I do not propose, however, to censor him too severely for not having been able to resist this tempting offer. I consider that the French method of doing things (or rather "the means used by a summer resort keen on publicity". *Ed.*) in order to tempt foreign helmsmen to a so-called Championship, extremely unfortunate. In certain countries, not only full board and lodgings in first class hotels are offered to competitors, but also a subsidy for transport according to the number of kilometres one has to cover." Mr. Jan Loeff quotes other similar cases and comes to the fair conclusion that the sport of yachting run the danger of pseudo-amateurism infiltration.