

Correspondence

We received the following letter from the *British Horse Society*, Bedford Square, London W. C. 1:

London October 17th 1956.

Dear Sir,

In your bulletin N° 56 on page 36 you mention that the first Equestrian Events were held in 1912 at Stockholm, a statement which I always understood was correct. However I recently purchased Dr. Ferenc Mezö's book The Modern Olympic Games which you refer to on page 52 of the same bulletin, and I was surprised to see on page 53 of this booklet dealing with the Paris Games in 1900 that Equestrian Events apparently figured in these Games.

Could you, from your record, tell me anything about these events. Who entered for them, regulations, rules. etc. ? I presume that your reference on page 36 ought to be amended to say that the Stockholm Games were the first Equestrian Events held under the regulations of the "Fédération Equestre Internationale".

Signed : R. A. Brown, Secretary.

Editor's reply :

The British Horse Society is perfectly right in its statement. The Equestrian Events at the Games of the Vth Olympiad which were celebrated at Stockholm in 1912, were the first Equestrian Events held under the rules and regulations of the F. E. I. On the other hand, it is also true to state that similar events did take place at the Games of the IInd Olympiad held in Paris on May 29th to 31st and on the 1st of June 1900. The Equestrian Events did figure on the programme of the Olympic Games, but they were organized according to the rules set forth by a Committee composed of personalities conversant with Equestrian sport, who adapted them to their own conception. With regard to these events,

one ought to recall the period when these Games were being held, as at that time, they were looked upon as a relaxation for the people who were visiting the International Exhibition in Paris. The technical Rules, more particularly those applying to the Equestrian sport, were more or less non-existent. Numerous additional events were held which do not figure in the Games' Programme. Let us mention a few among others : cricket, bowling, tennis (not lawn-tennis), golf, pelota, a balloon race, a motor-boat race, fishing, life-saving trials etc. All these competitions were held within the limits of the Exhibition and took place during the Olympic Games. The public was completely unaware of what was "Olympic" or not. The "Games" celebrations lasted from May till September. It was necessary to cater for all tastes. It is an established fact which has been confirmed by the official report, that the Equestrian Events which figured on the Olympic Programme then, were not sanctioned by Rules duly set by an international federation. The Organizing Committee of the Games of the IVth Olympiad which was held in London in 1908 did have the intention to organize Equestrian events, but this project failed owing to technical difficulties which arose in connection with the transport of horses. With regard to the Paris Games of 1900, we are giving herewith a few particulars concerning them :

Three events were contested there, namely : *steeple-chase* or *cross-country trials* (Dr. Mezö refers to them as "dressage". but this is surely an error), and *high jump* as well as *long jump*. Four nations took part in these competitions, they were : France (16 competitors), Italy (4 competitors), Belgium (3 competitors) and the United States which entered 1 competitor, thus bringing a total of 24 competitors.

Paris, therefore, can be considered as having been the precursor of the Olympic Equestrian Games, whereas Stockholm carried out into effect their realization.