

ROMAN SPLENDOUR AND ITS EFFECT ON THE GAMES

by Frédéric Schlatter

Formerly, once the celebration of the Olympic Games was over, no further reference was made to them for some time. Four years was however a long way ahead and there was plenty of time to think of the next 'gathering of the youth of the world'. The rush we live in nowadays does bring about a much greater acceleration of the rhythm of life and the planning of the future of the coming generations.

In the next few years, we shall often hear the enthusiastic and generous Italians talk with animation about the forthcoming Games. It is not long since one sung the praise, and rightly so, of the splendour and magnificent display of Cortina d'Ampezzo, yet, all this splendour was but the prelude to greater sumptuousness to come in Rome. The Games in Rome will surpass in splendour and beauty all one has seen hitherto...

The Olympic Flame will enter the city of the Games along the Appian Way, the famous historical route where the victorious Roman Legions marched past before passing under the arch of triumph. At the end of its long journey, the Olympic Flame will shine out for one night from the summit of the Capitole before being taken down to the Stadium for the solemn Opening of the Games.

Plans are also afoot to hold the Marathon along this Appian Way as a final apotheosis. In order to spare the runners the ordeal

of the overpowering heat of the Roman Summer, this race will be held at nightfall and the whole circuit will be lit by torchlight; the race is even planned to finish, not in the Olympic Stadium but at the Coliseum, this world famous amphitheatre which will afford the best background as a night setting for the finals of the greco-roman wrestling events.

While one cannot doubt that the Games in Rome will present the most astounding and gorgeous sight, one cannot but wonder at what will happen to the Games which are to follow such a climax. It is interesting to recall the fact that when the attribution of the Games of 1960 was voted in Paris by the International Olympic Committee, the latter had to choose between the candidatures of the two chief rivals. They planned to give two essentially different interpretations to this supreme festival of sport: Rome evoked as a matter of course historical grandeur, while Lausanne evoked simplicity in the Coubertin tradition.

But, after 1960, the large candidate cities will aspire at least to equal this Roman splendour, while the more modest candidates will wonder with anxiety if the Games which they would be capable of organizing will not make them appear to be poor relations !...

In all likelihood, this dilemma will not arise in 1964 when the Games will most likely be celebrated in a very large city. But what will happen afterwards ?

Melbourne has confirmed the tendency of running the Games on a gigantic scale : are the ethics of Olympism not going to suffer through this sooner or later ?