

Before Melbourne

The National Hungarian Olympic Oath !

We received last August, a book profusely illustrated bearing the title *Hungarian Sport before Melbourne*. This was published some time after the event by 'Sport' of Budapest. The texts reproduced below were compiled before the participation of the Hungarian contingent to the Winter and Summer Games of 1956. The foreword is entitled *Hungary and the Olympic Idea* and it bears the signature of Dr. Ferenc Mezö, member of the International Olympic Committee for Hungary. We thought it would interest our readers to get some information about the 'Olympic oath' imposed on the Hungarian team during a ceremony which took place in the 'Théâtre de l'Armée' Budapest in January 15th 1956. We propose to pass only brief comments on the matter of this oath which, in our opinion, is the only one of its kind. We have underlined certain passages which strike us as unusual or which express opinions with which we do not fully agree. Here is the oath :

I, member of the Olympic team of the Democratic Republic of Hungary, swear that by means of the experience gained in the course of my olympic training and in competitions and through my unshakable determination, I shall contribute TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE PRESTIGE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY.

I promise that all my activities and efforts WILL BE INSPIRED BY A GENUINE NATIONAL SPIRIT. I shall fight with all my strength FOR THE GLORY OF MY FATHERLAND, for better sporting results and for victory.

I shall endeavour to acquire all the possible experience and knowledge in order to further the way of success of the athletes belonging to the Olympic selected team of our Hungarian Democratic Republic, as well as for the welfare of our Physical Education and of sport in general.

I promise that in the sporting field and in my work, I shall conduct myself in a worthy manner as becomes the loyal son of our people and I shall strive honourably in the great tests to come.

I promise that I shall participate to *the sacred cause of the peoples* and the fight for peace with utmost devotion, and in the Olympic Games of 1956, I shall help to consolidate the forces acting towards universal peace and cultivate the Olympic Spirit in a manner worthy of a SOCIALIST SPORTSMAN.

In conclusion of this oath, may we recall a decision taken by the International Olympic Committee which appears page 97 (English text) among the rubric *General Information* in the booklet containing the Olympic Rules which runs as follows :

The International Olympic Committee considers, nevertheless as dangerous to the Olympic ideals, that, besides the proper development of sports in accordance with the principles of amateurism, certain tendencies exist which aim primarily at a *national exaltation* of the results gained instead of the realization that the sharing of friendly effort and rivalry is the essential aim of the Olympic Games.

We recall two other texts which figure in the same booklet of the International Olympic Committee page 84 (Page 82 English text) which says that as a result of a conference

between the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations in 1946, the following resolution was adopted which states among other matters :

They agreed to oppose with all their strength any commercial or POLITICAL interference with their work.

Further :

There is a tendency to concentrate too much ON PERFORMANCE AND NEW RECORDS, and not enough on the social, educational, aesthetic, ethnical and spiritual values of amateur sport.

The International Olympic Committee admits that national pride is a legitimate feeling, but the Olympic Games, just like any other sport contest, must not permit any implication of one nation's superiority over another, or that any political system is better than another.

The *Hungarian oath*, pronounced by the athletes of the Hungarian Delegation gives us food for thought.