

“ FOOTBALL POOLS ” ARE NOT IMMORAL ORGANIZATIONS

In Europe there are eight countries which organize football pools (also called *Sport-Toto*, or *Totocalcio* in Italy).

These forecasts are based on weekly results obtained from football matches and bring in considerable financial sums of which the sports themselves are the main beneficiaries.

The 3rd International Congress of Football pools has just been held in Stuttgart (Germany) and was attended by sixty Delegates who represented the eight following nations : Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. That Great Britain and Belgium were not represented, is due to the fact that though football pools do exist in these countries, these organizations belong to private companies and are run *without any benefit to the sport in question*. The fact that France was not represented at this Congress was looked upon with astonishment by many people but this is no concern of ours. The Dutch Football Federation sent a Delegate to the Congress as an observer. As a matter of fact, football pools although forbidden in that country until recently have now been recognized, although up to now, only members of football clubs are allowed to take part in these competitions.

In addition to the numerous administrative and technical problems which were discussed at this Congress, we are anxious to call to attention the statement made by the president, Mr. Thommen of Switzerland who declared : ‘No reasonably minded Government ought to reject the introduction of so charitable an institution which also is so profitable. The State, of course, receives an important tax from these pools, but they are also the means of bringing substantial subsidies to the sports which benefit by them. As far as the actual competition of *Sport-Toto* is concerned, it is a thrilling game without being dangerous. It is ridiculous to pretend that it is likely to corrupt the youth of today.’ Mr. Thommen goes on to say that ‘in no country Sport-Toto proved a rival to the National Lottery’.

Mr. Ottorini Barassi (Italy) stressed the importance of the help brought to the clubs and sport in general by Italian *Totocalcio*. The sums received by the Italian Football Clubs, for instance, afford them the possibility of enjoying almost all their railway travelling expenses free of charge, yet Italian Football receives only 2 % of the overall profit of *Totocalcio*. One half of the sums received by the clubs is devoted to their travelling expenses, the other half is spent on the

training of young players and maintenance of equipment. Moreover, all other Italian sports benefit equally from *Totocalcio* and the Italian National Olympic Committee which is in charge of the Olympic Games of 1960, draws as we know almost all its resources from this source. In conclusion, it is thanks to *Totocalcio* which is a *wholesome institution* that sport in general can exist in Italy.

Moreover, this phenomenon is not only characteristic to this nation, it is also to be found in Germany and in Switzerland, as well as in all the countries which were represented at the Congress in Stuttgart.

As long as these organizations are a source of profit to sport they are not immoral and are certainly far less dangerous than gambling in casinos !