

Concerning Bobsleigh at Squaw Valley

Last January-February, the Bobsleigh "World Championships" were held at Garmisch - Partenkirchen (Germany). We thought that as a result of the sharp controversy which arose among the interested parties with regard to the elimination of this sport from the Programme of the Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley, the F.I.B.T. (International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation) would stage a spectacular demonstration as far as the number of countries which participated in this event is concerned, and this in view of showing to the International Olympic Committee how many nations are really interested in this sport. We do not contest in anyway the value of this sport. We imagined that this federation would also be in a position to put forward the force of its arguments, thus opposing them to those entertained by the International Olympic Committee who foresees that there will be not enough entries for this sport in the Games of Squaw Valley, as was shown in the last issue of our Bulletin. Although it happened to be a "World Championship", the teams of only nine countries (Bob for two) and of seven countries (for Bob Race for 4 men, which is the most important event of this

race we believe) were competing namely : Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland and U.S.A. Only one team from oversea : that of the United States. We are far from wanting to minimize the importance of this sport where it is generally practised, as it demands of those (alas not sufficiently numerous) who practise it a rare mastership and unequalled self-control. What, however, one must admit is the fact that bobsleigh is a sport practised in the world only by a handful of young men. If nine countries were to be entered in Squaw Valley (and we do not imagine that there will be more European countries participating than at Garmisch) it would mean that a third of the competitors would be awarded an Olympic medal. Now, as far as we know, an Olympic medal must be *won* and not *given*.

In our opinion, this is all we propose to say in reply for the International Olympic Committee which has been the object of several criticisms at Garmisch.

P.S. Since writing this article, we received the following lines which we are glad to publish for the sake of objectivity.