
THE MEDITERRANEAN GAMES IN DANGER

We reported in our last issue that the Mediterranean Games were still to be held in Beirut this year, despite the events which have taken place in the Lebanon. Meanwhile we hear that the International Amateur Athletic Federation (I.A.A.F.) has passed an important resolution in the course of its Congress in Stockholm last August, whose effect will be to place the Lebanese authorities in an unusual, if not critical position. This decision might well have a serious effect upon the success of the Games, since it states that the authorization to organize athletic events at Regional Games may be granted only to those who invite the athletes of ALL COUNTRIES (having a federation affiliated to the I.A.A.F.) within that region. This decision has been taken as a result of the proposal put forward by the Israeli Sports Federation, and thus has a bearing on the Mediterranean Games. Hence, as will be realized by those who know of the present relationship existing between Israel and Lebanon, which is unfortunately of a political nature, since these countries do not maintain diplomatic relations with one another, it would seem most unlikely that the

Lebanese organizing body could invite the Israeli athletes, and equally impossible that the Israelis could accept such an invitation, even if it were extended to them.

Since the directive powers of the I.A.A.F. cannot overrule a decision taken in Congress, the Lebanese will have to find a new formula. This might involve abandoning the title of these 'Mediterranean Games' and entitling them 'Libanon Games', 'Beirut Games' or 'Tri-Continental Games' i.e.

From this moment the decision of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (I.A.A.F.) would no longer be applicable, since it relates only to 'regional' games, whereas the 'X... Games' can no longer be considered as such. Thus the I.A.A.F. would no longer forbid its members to take part. The change would be, in fact, only a matter of etiquette. Nevertheless the International Olympic Committee could not extend its patronage to these new Games, which would no longer be 'regional' Games. With the protagonists indulging in word-play, matters have not, at the time of going to press, advanced beyond this point.