

THE OLYMPIC DAY IN ITALIA

(By courtesy of the Italian National Olympic Committee.)

In 1958 the Italian National Olympic Committee organized for the first time an 'Olympic Day', whose aims were as follows :

1) Publicising and broadcasting the Olympic ideal according to the spirit of the International Olympic Committee.

2) Extension of sport amongst youth under the auspices of the five interlocked circles.

'Olympic Day' was celebrated throughout all the provinces of Italy from August 25th to September 11th 1958, a period corresponding to that of the forthcoming Olympics in 1960. This event comprised two main features, one of a cultural nature and the other concerned with sport.

The cultural aspect was organized by the regional committees of the Italian Committee and consisted chiefly of a conference stressing the importance of the Olympic Games, as well as a film show recalling past Olympiads and showing the sports installations and equipment envisaged for the Games of 1960.

The sports competitions, on the other hand, were held throughout Italy, even in the smallest villages, and were arranged by the national organizations chiefly concerned with the propagation of sport among Italian youth, such as the *Centro Sportivo Italiano*, the *Unione Italiana Sport Popolari*, the *Libertas sports groups*, etc. The conditions of entry for these competitions included an upper age limit of 18 years, competitors never having been members of a sports association.

To mark the 'Olympic Day', 60,000 copies of a special printed poster were given country-wide distribution and the design was also reproduced in picture postcard size (see our photograph). In addition, 30,000 commemorative medals, struck expressly for this event, were distributed.

The cultural celebrations also included the distribution of the official insignia of the

Italian Committee to the various regional committees.

We must also mention the valuable services performed by press and television, which contributed greatly to the realization of the aims of this manifestation.

Eminent personalities, members of parliament, mayors, journalists and sports leaders have all been good enough to enlighten the public on the pure and healthy principles, which must be the foundation of all sporting activities, as well as telling them of the high ethical value and nobility of the Olympic ideal.

In addition to the showing of the film *Rome 1960* and other instructional films concerned with sport, arrangements were made to combine the 'Olympic Day' celebrations with the opening of various sports installations. As well as this, various art exhibitions inspired by sport were arranged, as well as journalistic and literary competitions, relay races, in the streets of numerous towns, torchlight processions in several places; while the Olympic flame was symbolically kindled. Diplomas were also awarded for deserving sports achievements.

Altogether, more than 10,000 competitions of all kinds were held in which over 200,000 boys and girls took part, who had never participated in a sports competition before.

The closing ceremony of the 'Olympic Day 1958' took place in the *Forum Italicum* in Rome in the presence of high government officials, and was terminated by a speech delivered by the President of the Italian National Olympic Committee, Mr. Giulio Onesti.

This first realization of the 'Olympic Day' has, without a doubt, been of great importance in demonstrating to the Italian people the value of the Olympic spirit as well as the importance of the forthcoming Olympics in Rome.



Italian Youth seems interested in the celebration of the 'Olympic Day' which has been organized in all Italian Cities (see our text in the present edition).



The Olympic Flag at the memorial to the sportsmen killed in war. Photo taken on the occasion of the celebration of the 'Olympic Day'.