

Mr. Avery Brundage, president of the International Olympic Committee

Thank you Your Worship, for your friendly welcome. We are grateful for all you and your associates of the Municipality have done in preparing for the Games of the XVII. Olympiad. We thank also President Gronchi and the Government of Italy for its support. To President Andreotti and his colleagues of the Organizing Committee we extend our compliments for a task well done. President Onesti and the officers and members of the Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano deserve great credit for the happy outcome of their long years of devoted labour. And we are indebted to the people of Italy for their gracious and cordial reception. The warmhearted Italian hospitality and the efficient Italian organization which we experienced at Cortina d'Ampezzo four years ago at the VII. Olympic Winter Games remain fresh in our memory and we return to your wondrous country with great pleasure.

New glory has been added to the Eternal City. The handsome and imposing structures created for the Games are assets for the community, to be utilized and enjoyed by countless future generations. The strikingly original modern designs of Engineer Nervi compare with the masterpieces of Bramante, Bernini and Michaelangelo, and the monuments left by Hadrian, Trajan and the other Ceasars. All the world comes once more today to pay homage to the leadership of the ageless City on the banks of the Tiber.

Centre of the civilized world two thousand years ago, Rome now becomes Capital of the world of sport, in many respects the most important of all its other titles. The Empire of Augustus, created and defended by tough and martial Roman legions, the greatest of ancient times, is dwarfed by the world of sport today, which includes all five continents, more than ninety different countries, practically the entire globe. No Monarch ever held sway over such a vast expanse of territory.

All roads have led to Rome not only because it is a political capital but for the reason that it is also a spiritual centre and for centuries headquarters of the Christian religion.

Many religions have extended their dominion and have been adopted by large sections of the world, but all too often the Cross or the Crescent has been accompanied by the sword. No philosophy or religion, however, has spread so widely and so quickly as the Olympic Movement in its modern development.

The Olympic Movement has had neither armies nor money but in sixty years it has enlisted the enthusiastic support of the peoples of more than four score countries. It has spread with this amazing speed solely through the efforts of unpaid but

dedicated and devoted volunteers. Christians, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists and atheists, all respect its basic principles of common honesty, mutual regard, fair play and good sportsmanship, which are the essence of all religion.

The code of Justinian was enforced by Roman legions but the Olympic code, applied without fear or favour, with no distinctions save those of measured performance, is accepted freely by all—royalists, democrats, communists and capitalists. The greatest political empires held together by force have crumbled and perished and have been succeeded by other empires, but the world of sport, which joins all humanity in its highest manifestations, grows stronger day by day without soldiers and without dollars.

And just as glory has been added to Rome, so the Olympic Games become more lustrous through being staged here. As a beautiful picture is enhanced by its frame and a sparkling gem by its setting, so the Games of the XVII. Olympiad will become even more brilliant in the capital of the Italian Republic with its famous historical and artistic background and its antiquarian interest. Where else can be found such a back drop for this great festival of youth?

The ancient Olympic Games began as a religious and fine arts festival with only one athletic event. The Greek ideal of the Golden Age was a good all-round development. Their gods were accomplished in all fields, wise and intelligent, as well as strong, handsome and graceful. We have come far from this early conception and today we need to strengthen the educational, moral and the cultural aspects of the programme. Where better can this be done than in Rome, which itself is an artistic treasure house with an ecclesiastical atmosphere. The important exhibition of the history of sport in art staged in one of the vast halls of E.U.R. and the series of other cultural events that have been arranged will be most helpful.

Here in Rome the Olympic Movement will reach new heights and yet there are those who would alter the structure and change the rules.

These proposals must be examined with great care. The strength of the Olympic Movement and its universal popular appeal come from certain very important fundamental principles. The first is the complete autonomy and independence of the International Olympic Committee, entrusted with the promotion and protection of the Olympic Movement, whose members must be completely impartial and in a position to resist pressure from any quarter—political, religious or financial. To inspire respect for the integrity of the Committee, their allegiance to the Olympic Movement must be undivided.

Since the Olympic Games, because of the tremendous expense involved, can exist only by reason of the contributions of time and effort from all concerned, no one—competitors, officials or organizers—can be permitted to profit from them. The Games must never be commercialized. Moreover, every effort must be made to keep this expense to a minimum, to prevent the introduction of extraneous events, and to maintain their simplicity, their dignity, and their nobility. We must choose between the temple and the circus.

No deviation can be permitted from the fundamental and basic principle that there shall be no discrimination because of race, religion or politics. The Olympic Games are, and must be kept, open to the youth of all the world if they are fully to serve their purpose.

Lastly, the Games must remain amateur. Amateurism is something of the spirit, intangible and

difficult to define, but badly needed in these materialistic times in which we live. It is a quality like charity, friendship and love, which cannot be measured in dollars, but without which the world would be a dismal place.

When I said a few moments ago that 'Capital of the World of Sport' might well be the most important of all the many titles of Rome, it was not a flippant remark. I was indeed serious, for the world of sport, the world where a man is judged impartially on his own merits regardless of his religion, his family, his political convictions, his social, or his financial standing, a world where the man who jumps the highest, or the man who runs the fastest, wins the victory, a world where winners and losers meet as friends, and where the participants value honour above success, is the world which has been sought by educators, statesmen and philosophers since the beginning of time, and until these same principles are adopted in other fields, mankind will never emerge from the jungle. The Capital of the world of sport is indeed the most important of all capitals.