

unknown to the workman, artisan, clerk or shopkeeper as well as to the farmer who worked the land from the break of day till dusk.

But our century has seen drastic changes and experienced unprecedented upheavals in the condition of men.

The advent of machinery followed by the wide prospects opened today by cybernetic and automation allied to the social improved conditions have affected and are likely to go on affecting seriously the living conditions of men. The number of working hours in each profession is likely to go on decreasing steadily.

In this way, everyone will have more time to devote to recreation and occupations entirely devoid of an utilitarian character.

This evolution towards the world of machinery and robot is however, fraught with dangers. Will man know how to escape the ascendancy reached by the mechanical devices he has created? Will he know how to retain a just proportion of the sense of real values? Keep his own free will and preserve his dignity, in a nutshell will man be able to keep his personality as a human being?

Sport can and must come in a decisive manner to the rescue of culture, not only because it is wonderfully apt to help fill up leisure times but chiefly because it is the perfect antidote against spiritual and moral deformation which may be caused by mechanization.

Men have already grasped the situation, and the infatuation of the masses for sport is a sure sign of it. Is it not wonderful that in our times, when satellites are already

inhabited, displace themselves in stellar spaces at speeds the human brain can hardly conceive, millions of men belonging to all races and colours are infatuated with sport to the extent of being excited over the gain of a tenth of a second on distances covered at 36km per hour?

When scientists project in the cosmos masses weighing several tons, men strive to breaking point in order to gain one centimetre at the shot-put at a distance of 20 metres of a ball weighing 7kg 250... Is it not significant that 'l'Ecole Polytechnique', one of our most famous colleges, happens to be the place where sport is most fervently practised and where the best sport achievements are obtained? Gauging by spiritual values, it is man, who, in his quality of recipient of the divine spark, must remain the master of creation and not the machine.

In conclusion, let us quote from the writings of Pierre de Coubertin when he said: 'In our mind, the Olympic idea is the concept of a strong muscular culture based on one side on the chivalrous spirit, and on the other on the esthetic notion and the cult of what is beautiful and graceful.'

Further, he goes on to say: 'Mankind, who is free to relax in the luxury of the mind or of that of the senses, must, in order to avoid a swift and complete downfall, create for himself imaginary gardens testing his courage and test his resistance by plunging in rough swimming pools! As it is essential he should seek occasions to rediscover the invigorating elements of effort, sense of danger and maintain his self-discipline which all tend to form his moral hygiene and that nothing else can replace.'

Has the necessity for uniting culture to sport ever been more strongly expressed?