

## ***Doping, the International Olympic Committee and the Press***

In our recent editions, we have frequently discussed the problem of doping. The International Olympic Committee has nominated a commission for the purpose of studying this problem and reporting on measures which it considers should be taken to eliminate this scourge, which is so harmful to young sportsmen who take to drugging often without realizing what they are doing.

Since the alarm was raised by the International Olympic Committee, and even before this, other organizations have been preoccupied with this problem. Since then, meetings, conversations and conventions have gone into this problem with an urgency

which is of topical interest to all who are connected with sport, whether they are amateurs or professionals. The national federations — and through them the international federations — are very much taken up with the problem of doping, and hardly a day passes without mention in the Press of cases of abuse being discovered and sanctions being taken against those who, for lack of scruples or any moral sense, have neglected their essential duty and who risk the health and well-being of the young in their charge.

The federations are aware of their responsibilities. Footballers and cyclists have

suffered bitterly. Some among them have recently been severely punished. The struggle against this regrettable abuse of drugs is entering a decisive phase. Trainers and athletes have been warned. The main struggle is only just beginning, and it will intensify, as we have already stated, by reason of the comprehension and the severity of the sporting federations. (Even race-horses have not been spared, and an enquiry was even instigated in Great Britain where Scotland Yard was brought in.) It is also to be hoped that certain national federations will disregard questions of national prestige when drawing the attention of their athletes to this danger. We do not, of course, single out any special federation, but we should like them to be especially alive to this human weakness. The controls and sanctions applied should be severe if we are to save the youth of the world from the poison which is doping. The struggle must be intensified against the poisoners, for we must call them by their proper name. The Press itself can collaborate actively in this sphere by denouncing what it knows, and it must be recognized that the Press have never yet failed in this duty.

We think that the task thus gone beyond the doping commission of the international Olympic Committee, (which has not replaced its president, Dr. Perreira Santos of Sao Paulo, who died recently) and that its functions should automatically be taken over by those who are more directly in contact with the athletes, and here we refer to the sporting federations.

#### DOPING CHECKED?

Under this title Serge Lang, in a recent edition of the *Gazette de Lausanne*, gives some very pertinent advice. After having quoted Dr. Dumas, official medical adviser to the 'Tour de France', who confirms on the medical and scientific planes that on the basis of empirical observations, the absurd and detestable use of pep pills at the last 'Tour' showed a definite decline. This piece of news, encouraging as it may be, is explained by the improvement in the form of the competitors and by a very marked advance

in their athletic standard. Serge Lang has never gone back on his former opinion in the face of all the false prophets who, only two years ago, pretended to have discovered this scourge. Doping, he says, is not in any way a problem which has any connection with the spiritual state or moral qualities of the athletes, but essentially, if not entirely, has to do with their physical condition and athletic prowess. Doping is the weapon of the weak who try to make up for a deficient physical condition in an artificial and fallacious manner. The author of this article adds that there is no known instance of an authentic champion being mixed up in any scandal concerning doping. Those of whom we speak in connection with such matters are generally athletes of modest if not of mediocre ability. The most recent victims of doping in Switzerland, in Austria and in Denmark are all sportsmen who tried to give the impression of being of a much higher athletic standard than they really were. In the final count however, it is not by repressive measures — indispensable certainly, but unfortunately not very effective — that we can hope to put an end to these practices. It is rather by the systematic dismissal from any competition of all those competitors whose physical form or athletic prowess is not up to the required standard.

In the struggle against doping, Serge Lang thinks that it will soon be possible to show real progress. In fact, a very interesting experiment has just been tried out in France. On a sporting level, it is of absorbing interest. It consists of giving athletes a fortifying diet according to the most recent research and discoveries in the field of dietetics, taking into account that they are subject to sustained and sometimes gruelling tests.

This can constitute an important weapon in the fight against drugs. It is in point of fact most desirable that doctors who try out this experiment on the occasion of the *Tour de l'Avenir* (The little 'Tour de France' reserved for amateurs and independent cyclists. *Editor.*) should make their dossiers on their interesting experiences freely available to all.

*Editor's Note.* And we add: 'Let us hope that Serge Lang is right.'