

Here and there **An Idol has spoken**

PAAVO NURMI was known in his great days for his taciturnity. He has now become a chatterbox. *Der Sport* of Zurich has this to say in a recent editorial which gives these outpourings of the ex-champion.

'Young people of today like their ease. They wait for the ripe plums to fall into their laps. They go off on motor-bicycles or drive in cars instead of walking. Their legs are only used for pressing on the accelerator pedal and their hands to turn on the ignition. The accumulated bodily idleness of the youth of Finland and of other countries too is also transmitted to their intellectual faculties. All idea of personal sacrifice is lost.'

Nurmi does not only attack youth. He expresses himself very forcibly with regard to present-day methods of training.

The work is done with the aid of tables, perforated cards and time keepers, as if one were dealing with machines and not with

human beings. Modern trainers are concerned with turning human beings into robots. Our modern civilization is about to dig its own grave with its up-to-date technical means of full production.

'Television, for example, is making of humanity a community of armchair athletes. In time, this state of affairs will become such that the championships will take place in front of stands empty of spectators. It is obviously easier to hear the panting of the athlete when he makes his final spurt and to watch the daring pole jumper or the footballer shooting for goal with a glass of whisky in the hand and comfortably settled in an upholstered chair than it is on the actual spot.'

Thus thinks Nurmi, who, in spite of his disqualification in 1932 for professionalism, has remained the idol of sport in Finland, where a statue has been erected in his honour and to his glory.