

Address by president Elola-Olaso, of the Spanish Olympic Committee

Let my first salutation words be in name of the Spanish Olympic Committee. Of sincere welcome to all those who from distant or neighbouring lands, come to visit us, to collaborate with us in these working hours that, beforehand, I wish they be advantageous and profitable in solutions as well as in agreements.

And, together with the welcome salutation, my gratitude goes to the head of State and leader of Spain, that honours us with his presence in this inaugural act. To the ministers accompanying him. To the ambassadors. To the international and Spanish press.

The International Olympic Committee deserves our particular recognition for having chosen

Madrid as its place for celebrating this 63rd plenary session. I voice the Madrilenian people and express its deep gratitude guaranteed by the presence of the capital of Spain's Mayor, who has supported us so greatly.

This is not the first time that the I.O.C. designates a Spanish city as place for a plenary session. In 1931, Barcelona was chosen for that purpose, though the meeting owing to alien causes had not a normal development. Already in 1900, Spain took part in the Paris Olympic Games. Little afterwards Spanish representatives were admitted in the International Olympic Committee. In 1920, in Antwerp, Spain obtained the first medals. In 1924, the Spanish Olympic Com-

mittee was constituted, with the Baron de Güell as first president. Spain thus has coped with and has been present in the games and meetings, it has given its points of views, notwithstanding, it must be recognized that our nation has not been one really outstanding in the Olympiades' evolution.

In the last years, our country has become intensively and in great extent concerned in the social values of renewal that the Olympic Movement implies. Besides an increasing participation in games and in the contributions to the olympic ideas, our country has understood the trascendent the noble sporting ideas as well as the integration in the educative tasks of a well framed physical education mean for a nation.

In December 1961, a physical education law was set forth, which promotes, organizes and regulates the exercise of this discipline and in which is gathered and contemplated the personality and independence of the Spanish Olympic Committee, regulating its activities and establishing at the same time the protection of the olympic emblems and denominations. This law has enabled the scheme of a decennial plan of sporting structures, that will be a bequest for future generations, and a great portent show the tasks performed in the first four years, not elapsed yet.

I have allowed myself to outline these ideas before the distinguished members of the International Olympic Committee, because they are inspired in the concern of viewing the present needs of a nation where the social phenomenon of sport penetrates among other motives to compensate the automaticity and sedentarism of life in great cities, especially in the great manufacturing sectors. All this agrees with the most genuine spirit of Baron de Coubertin, for whom the olympic event, the great "Youth's Feast", was nothing else but the touchstone, the awakening of a collective conscience towards the rejuvenating practice of sport nobly conceived. Let us quote those words of his: "Nothing matters more in the turbulent times that are approaching, than the endowment to the adult of an important physical and mental equilibrium. This will be the most efficient sinew, decisive in the civilization born from our struggles and those of our ancestors."

In all the writings of the founder of the modern Olympic Games, constantly beats the idea of a social pedagogy. It is important to clearly maintain these rules that admit the great sporting events inasmuch as they determine large courses of practice and an incorporation of sports in the daily habits. The sport nobly performed dignifies and evens up both spirit and body. Welcome be the champion if he settles a constellation of active followers, and not just a court of passive clamour.

Important is this and is more in the present times in which the four year performance of the

Olympic Games grows and grows. It grows in number of participants, in attending countries, in financing cost and in magnificence. Rome surpassed the precedent cities. Tokyo was a condign rival of Rome. Mexico, naturally, covets to excell both of them. This is a symptom of the increasing prestige, the olympic motion rises fearless, progressively, each time stronger. If we congratulate ourselves because of this, we must not remain contented.

The developing crises arise in entities as well as in human beings. These crises must be forecast before they are endured. It is already a sign that some, not many, but yet some norms and rules are losing tints of actuality.

The problem is neither new nor easy. And we are not ignorant either of the attempts and struggles to face it. Some of the recent agreements in Rome mean a good step, gathering the suggestions of the Italian Olympic Committee that have been studied by the brisk intelligence of the Executive Committee and principally by its president, Mr. Avery Brundage.

Our president, on occasion of the speech he delivered on account of the opening of the 60th session, marked us a significant track: "Countries which are alarmed by their low Olympic standing should proceed in a legitimate manner to lay the proper foundation in their educational system and not confine their efforts to the champions. It is a national programme of physical training and competitive sport with proper stress on the ethical values that should be subsidized and not individual athletes. Too often it is only the sports elite that is considered in the hasty programmes that are thrown together primarily for national aggrandizement. The real objective is a strong and healthy youth."

This is the way, though at the same time, it might be convenient to revise the system of appraisal in the olympic contests, so that a great majority that attend to the call of "participation" may not be baffled by the actual system that only stands out the superchampions. Upon this, we shall formulate a concrete proposal.

There is not in these words a critical tone but a genuine spirit of perfection.

We love this task and the olympic ideals because they tend to the even formation of man and moreover, because they promote friendship and peace among nations. That is why we feel happy to receive you all as emissaries, not only of sports but of the lofty and noble ideals that the Olympic Movement represents as well.

We wish you a very happy stay among us and we yearn that this meeting be a portent for enabling us in the near future to have you here again in a "Youth's Feast", in other Olympic Games, for which Spain is preparing itself with the wish of contributing in a greater extent in the olympic motion.