

editorial

While we were hesitating on the theme of this editorial, the newspaper arrived with sensational headlines heralding the following news item : "Cyclists taking part in the *Tour de France* go on strike. For three minutes, racers stopped in protest against the checks carried out on them in pursuance of the French law against doping. 'We are free men' said one of the cyclists at the end of this manifestation 'As free men, we wanted to protest against a law that we consider unjust.' " If in order to make our point we have chosen an incident occurring in the field of professional sport, it is because, at least to our knowledge, no similar incident has been noticed so far in amateur sport. Let us beware however of concluding — it would be tempting and not necessarily unrealistic — that there is some relation between cause and effect, especially as the I.O.C. has also been compelled to adopt regulations condemning and punishing the use of stimulants at the Olympic Games, and now let us drop the anecdote there.

What interests us today is the conception certain men have of freedom... a freedom they brandish as a safe-conduct to cheat with themselves and with others. When all is said and done, the need to win *at all costs* is nothing but a form of *fear*, the fear of losing a hope of glory or a fragile prestige ; the fear of being, at no matter what price, the first, and therefore the greatest, concealing after all only a pitiful uncertainty.

Of a child who, in order to get a better mark, copies the work of the pupil next to him or leads him astray with the wrong information, we would say that, needing love, he is afraid of being scolded and rejected, and he will probably be sent to the psycho-analyst. But of the adult, the athlete ? Shall we simply say that, being born free, he is morally free to take an unfair advantage over another if he wants to ? No, we call it a breach of confidence... and a very superficial conception of what, more than life itself, is essential to man : freedom.

The authors of the stirring Declaration of the Rights of Man knew human nature very well, completing the fine article 4, according to which freedom consists in doing anything that does not harm another person, with an act of faith followed by a pathetic admission. "Thus", we read first of all, "the exercise of the natural rights of each individual is limited only by those that guarantee other members of society the enjoyment of these same rights". And finally : "*These limits can be determined only by law.*"

Laws and regulations are necessary therefore since man, the one who decides on them and decrees them, is often incapable of submitting to them until they become law.

Must we therefore conclude that the freedom we clamour for so loudly is too heavy to be borne ?

Editor.