

Address by Mr. Giulio Onesti president of the C.O.N.I.



Giulio Onesti : "... the I.O.C. has had the good fortune to be guided by eminent and energetic men convinced by one faith alone."

The Italian National Olympic Committee has the honour of addressing a greeting of homage and welcome to the International Olympic Committee which has kindly conceded the privilege to the City of Rome of acting as host to the present Session, the 64th in number, of the modern Olympic movement.

Our thoughts immediately revert back to the times of some six years ago, when Rome celebrated the Games of the XVII Olympiad and, at same time, the ordinary Session of the I.O.C., number 57.

A sense of comprehensible nostalgia and legitimate pride returns to us when we remember those days and the joy involved.

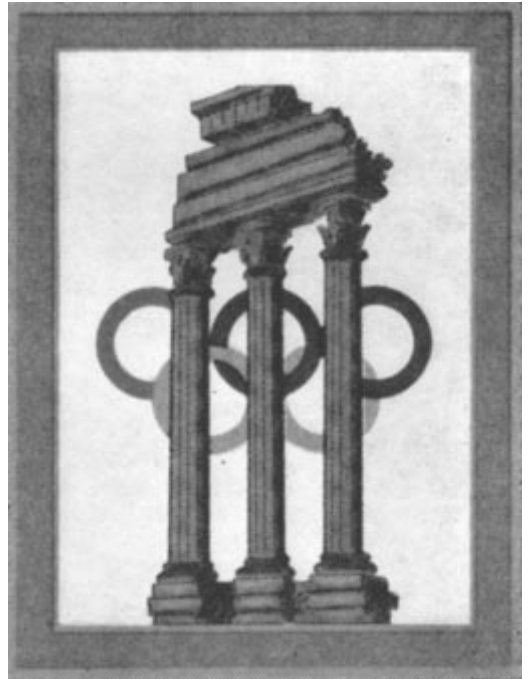
During the course of a lifetime, only once does it happen, if it happens, to be able to preside over the organization of an Olympiad. And if we think of the amount of time lost over such hopes, and if we think, and remember, of the long alternating and various vicissitudes of the history that prevented us from achieving our dreams, one will understand how we, despite a lengthy experience of sports matters, continue to keep in our hearts, as though it were the dearest gift, the memory of those Olympic days of Rome.

On the eve of that event, president Brundage expressed words of praise and recognition to us that really appeared not to be merited. But president Brundage loves the classicality and the treasures of Mediterranean civilisation. Also he, in the same way as the I.O.C., had wanted the Olympic Games to be celebrated one day in Rome. The I.O.C. will have our unbounded recognition for this because it re-opened the door to us of the great house such as is world sport, after the end of an infortunate conflict that had upset our Country as well as our spirit.

In faith, from Pierre de Coubertin to Baillet-Latour right up to Brundage, the I.O.C. has had the good fortune to have been guided by eminent and energetic men convinced by one faith alone. From a very small original group, the National Olympic Committees have grown ever more in number, giving to sports organizations an aspect and significance of a true world nature. It is from the I.O.C. that each Olympic Committee obtains inspiration and example.

We as the Italian National Olympic Committee wish to renew, here in Rome, before the representatives of sport from the five continents, our dedication to the I.O.C., as well as our will to custody and respect its values and its work.

From 1894 to today, the world has gone through sad moments and more than once has it appeared that pity and charity had vanished from the minds of mankind. But the I.O.C. continued, without hesitation whatsoever, to preach its words of equality and fraternity.



Whilst others suggested discrimination, hate and homicide to peoples, the I.O.C. continued to repeat that all men are equal, without difference in political faith, race or religion.

We all owe an immense sense of gratitude and homage to this new Pantheon of human civilisation.

We shall show such sentiments by having constant respect for an organization that is above us, but also in us.

May we have the good fortune to see, during the course of our life, application amongst people and continents of the high principles that the I.O.C. has indicated and repeated. May we continue to witness events of joy and loyal competition amongst youth from all corners of the earth. May stadia, gymnasiums, sports fields be the only venues for encounters and combat. May it be throughout all schools that lessons be taught for love and reciprocal respect, such as been dictated from the pulpit of the I.O.C. even in those dark days when hate seemed to have had the upper hand.

These are the sentiments that we not only agree with, but preach within the precincts of our sports habitat, and we wish to solemnly reconfirm here at this happy festival of world sport.

It is with sincere joy that we once again see amongst us the eminent colleagues and dear friends from every continent who do the same work as ourselves, with the same faith and with undeniable capacity.

In the name of all Italian sportsmen, who from the smallest of provincial societies, from training centres to sport of infants, converge in sports federations and, through these, in the Olympic Committee, I address a heartfelt and sincere greeting.

Immediately after the splendid Rome Games were over, the various sports venues were opened up to the new generations of sportsmen. Italian sport is lucky enough to be autonomous, and is grateful to the Government authorities which safeguard its liberty and encourage its development. In recent times the Government measures in favour of sport have been extremely useful, guaranteeing us a more secure existence richer in hopes for the future.

We all joyfully see the return under the sky of Rome of the Olympic flag, the flag of our youth, our ideals and our hopes.

Thank you, gentlemen, for having offered us once again such a gift.