

Address by Mr. Aldo Moro president of the Council of ministers

President Saragat meeting with the International Federations. From left to right : Messrs. Amilcare Rotta (bob-sleigh), Beppe Croce (yachting) and Thomas Keller (rowing).



Both personally and on behalf of the Italian Government, I have the honour of conveying our greetings, official but at the same time friendly



and cordial, to the members of the International Olympic Committee meeting in Rome for their 64th session.

Already gratified six years ago by the flame of Olympia, thanks to the incomparable gift made them by the International Olympic Committee, Rome and Italy alike once more joyfully welcome you.

In the seventy years of its activity, the International Olympic Committee has achieved ambitious objectives, gathering together in the modern Olympic Games the peoples of the whole world. The Olympic ideal, fruit of a masterly intuition, has today become the natural attitude of man and peoples who believe in the values of equality, mutual respect and brotherhood. Owing its strength solely to the faith it expresses and the goodwill it evokes, without material wealth or concrete powers, the Olympic ideal has spread throughout the world, has outrun international organizations, creating a contact, a common point of negotiation and meeting and, thus, a new hope. The remarks made by president Brundage and by president Onesti concerning the authentic and profound significance of the Olympic spirit have impressed me considerably ; and I am in complete agreement with them. Here once more man's personality, his dignity, his spirit of solidarity and his aptitude to generate in freedom, fruitful encounters, are exalted. Disinterested and loyal competition is no cause for dissent, but unity. The proof of ability in mutual respect and friendship, the equality of rights revendedicated by all men, such as race, religion, political vision, the

prevalence of the sports spirit, free and autonomous, over a conception of life dominated by expediency and interest, grace and beauty as harmonious and intimate manifestations at once of the body and of the spirit, the affirmation of a universally valid code of behaviour : all these are significant aspects of the Olympic experience based on human values and vocation. Thence said values find their place in history and in the life of the peoples. Certain forms of political organization could create obstacles in the way of the free and autonomous application of the Olympic spirit and of the activity inspired by same ; just as, on another plane, professionalism, with its temptations, could corrupt that spirit and compromise the admirable human significance of sports competition.

On this solemn occasion I therefore wish to confirm once more, on behalf of my country, its refusal of any discrimination, prejudice or violence, and its profound respect for the free expression of intelligence, ability and pure strength of man. This attitude of ours is the outcome of the Constitution which regulates our democratic life, and of the history and tradition of our country which expresses in art, in beauty, in harmony and the works of the spirit, its authentic vocation. Thus there are obstacles which we have to overcome and risks which we should attempt to protect sport from, maintaining its genuine competitive spirit.

The gratitude of the Italians as a whole and especially of those fulfilling public functions who are especially aware of the decisive contribution of such values to the education of men and citizens, to social concord and international collaboration, goes to the Olympic Committee, which has successfully affirmed and upheld such values whose lofty significance has been evoked. Thanks to the policy of the International Olympic Committee and to the experience provided by the Olympic Games, Italy is possessed of an autonomous sports sector jealous of an independence which the government is careful not to interfere with, and which it upholds as a fundamental value of the national community. Although faced by ever new and serious problems, the government continues to bear in mind that sport is an instrument of liberation and formation, an essential heritage of the younger generation, who are the country's future. It will therefore do its utmost to respect and promote such sport, providing it with appropriate organizational structures. Thus the most promising and prepared young people will find in the free associations, in the federations and the C.O.N.I. suitable sites for their training. We are pleased to note that these young people, who combine with sport the careful study and scrupulous

fulfilment of their various duties, are more disciplined, conscientious, more mature and joyful, in short, are more truly men.

Mr. President, Members of the International Olympic Committee, for this human wealth of our youth, which we hope will become the heritage of ever vaster masses, we are infinitely grateful to you. And it is in this spirit that we welcome you to Rome. You, and the young sports enthusiasts from all over the world whom you so worthily represent, imbue the Italian nation with new vigour, making it, both physically and morally, healthier, stirring enthusiasm in it, and giving it faith in itself and in the future of humanity. For the future is assured in peace, in loyal contest which exalts man and puts to the test his moral strength and ability to win, but does not destroy.

Italy pays due homage to the men who uphold and practise such ideals, to the members of the International Olympic Committee and to all the eminent sports authorities gathered here from the countries of every continent. And, ever grateful for the understanding shown with regard to sport in Italy, consciously devoted to the Olympic ideal, we wish you fruitful work for the affirmation of sport, for the wellbeing of the younger generation and for understanding among men and peoples.

On behalf of the president of the Italian Republic, Hon. Saragat, who has assigned this most welcome duty to me, I declare the 64th session of the International Olympic Committee open.

Opening of the exhibition for the 1972 Games at Foro Itálico. In front, from left to right : Colonel R. H. Russell (boxing and International Federations) and Messrs. Thaon de Revel, de Stefani, Brundage and Onesti (I.O.C.).



Photos by Roberto Andrei, Rome