

“COLISEUM ‘32-‘84”

ARS ET SCIENTIA TEMPORIS MENSURAE

AN EXHIBITION ON TIMING

It may be fairly simple to organize the technical side of a football match or of a swimming competition, but the problem is far more complex when it comes to the proper coordination of a major athletics event.

The wide variety of events held simultaneously, the size of the field where they are held and the distance of the spectator from the scene of the event, have made accurate, systematic and instant information an essential rule of the game. Such information is of course necessary for the competitors as well as for the judges responsible for the official supervision of their performance, but it is also necessary for the mass media and for the public who watch the show from their seats in the stadium.

Since Omega already took care of the timing of the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1932, it seemed interesting to compare the manual stopwatch of that time to the modern technology which was harnessed to gauge the athletes' performances at the Games of the XXIVth Olympiad. The comparison is made all the more interesting by the fact that the Games took place, fifty-two years later, at the same stadium, which is absolutely unique in the history of the modern Olympic Games.

For several years we intended to organize an exhibition on timing and on the various chronometric measuring instruments used in sports competitions. The Olympic Museum's exhibition, with the addition of a few items and documents belonging to the collections of the house, also has a teaching purpose.

Its layout follows a logical course: Beginning with the starter's gun, proceeding to such indications as the runners' reaction time and the wind



speed, and ending with the colour picture of the finish, it should enable the visitor to get a proper idea of the modern technology used in sport.

Without Jean-Pierre Bovay, Technical Manager of “Omega Sports Timing”, the father of modern timing, the exhibition could never have been organized. We wish to express our infinite gratitude for his valuable collaboration and we should like to reproduce below the few words he addressed to the audience at the opening ceremony (above) of this remarkable exhibition. Among the crowd of guests at the opening ceremony were H.E. Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. François Millet, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Société Suisse de Microélectrique et d’Horlogerie SA, and Mr. Jacques Lienhard, Councillor representing the City of Lausanne.

J.-F.P.