

MELBOURNE REVISITED

Mr. Janusz Piewcewicz, Administrator of the Association of National Olympic Committee (ANOC), has just returned from his second trip to Australia, thirty years after his first visit as Assistant Chef de Mission to the Polish team at the Games in Melbourne in 1956. He recounts how Olympism fares there from day-to-day.

In sport, Australia does not rely so much on frequent international encounters as on intense internal activity. First and foremost, the daily practice of sport, including sport for all and school sport, is given every opportunity to flourish. Space, of course, is still not lacking and there are plenty of stadiums both large and small, tennis courts, golf courses, swimming pools and playing fields.

As for big competitions, I was able to attend some football matches "Aussie-rules" style. This is a sports discipline half-way between football and rugby. The huge Melbourne Cricket Ground, on which the nations paraded for the opening ceremony of the Games of the XVIth Olympiad in Melbourne in 1956, was packed. The papers devote entire pages to these sports encounters, which take place between clubs of the same district. On the other hand, they do not write a

great deal about events in other disciplines — even when it is a question of a new world record in athletics.

My visit to Australia this year came just a few weeks after that of the IOC President, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, to the region. I was able to announce at the Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Olympic Council (one of the constituent bodies of the Australian NOC), presided over by Mr. Judy Patching, Secretary General of the Oceania National Olympic Committees, that the ANOC President, Mr. Mario Vázquez Raña, will also be making a trip to Australia shortly. I was full of admiration for the Australian Olympic administrators who know not only how to raise enthusiasm for the Olympic disciplines as the Games approach, but also how to obtain excellent results from their representatives. At this assembly, Sir Donald Trescowthick, businessman and chairman of the Victorian Olympic Council's Corporate Committee, announced that the goal of one million dollars had been fixed for the 1988 Olympic Fund. This is a large amount for a country where sponsors and supporters already give considerable sums to support football and baseball.

Even if, as in several other places, the Olympic sports are not the most popular within the country itself, perhaps the devotion to them in Australia stems from the links it creates with other continents. But this is precisely the strength of the Olympic Movement — that it is able to unite young people all over the world.



From left to right, Messrs. Julius Patching, Janusz Piewcewicz, and Mr. Bill Hoffmann.