EDITORIAL

This Autumn sees the end of another Olympic year, and few connected in any way with the "Games" - so-called - should be sorry to see it end. Once again, devious political manoeuvres heralded the early part of the stay in Munich, and the terrible political murders eclipsed the worst political prejudices of the pre-war Games in Berlin, and was unequalled, as far as we know, by anything that took place in the classical Games of 2000 years ago. All our sincere sympathy goes to the athletes and officials of the Israeli team, to the families of the victims, and to all athletes of every race whose sporting efforts are dominated by the actions and indoctrination of their political paymasters and by their enemies. The whole concepts of international friendship and cooperation through sport has been dealt a most severe blow, which could well see the end of international sport as we have seen it for the past century.

Despite these tragic events, the Games produced outstanding performances in many sports, and again many World and Olympic records were broken. The reasons for this continued improvement in performance are many, and complicated. One of the principal ones is the scientific development of all aspects of training and acquisition of physical fitness, to bring men of high potential in their sport to ever-increasing standards of excellence. This has needed a professional approach on the part of the coaches, backed by sound laboratory investigations directly applicable to fitness. These concepts are comparatively recent, but have already replaced the amateur enthusiasm of only a decade ago. In the same way, Sports Medicine has also grown into a highly specialised branch of Occupational Medicine, and although Britain badly lags behind nearly all Northern European countries, even the smallest of them, it is slowly becoming recognised, especially by the athletes and coaches who need this specialised service. There is already a Diploma in Sports Medicine granted by the International Federation of Sports Medicine, and recently the Executive Committee of this body have recognised Britain as a country in which there is a sufficient body of knowledge for courses to be run leading to the award of this Diploma by examination.

In many ways, it is a pity to see the end of the true amateur, in sport as well as in sports medicine and its supplementary professions, but competition from overseas forces this upon us. In track and field athletics, and most games, the specialist in sports medicine can help to maintain general health, and give early treatment to soft-tissue injuries. In general, his work is not essential to the saving of life in those stadium events within reach of ambulance and hospital. In the field of outdoor pursuits, the matter is very different, and prompt and correct early treatment of aquatic accidents and accidental hypothermia are measures that save life. Not only must the doctors working in this field be properly trained and well equipped, they must also be able to train to a high level the members of first-aid, mountain rescue and diving decompression teams that are usually the first to make contact with the patient, and upon whose efficiency his life depends. In this issue of the Journal are several articles produced as verbal communications at two meetings held during the past year in Scotland. Most emphasise the need for the doctor to be in the place where he is most use, even though this reduces the drama of his role. In this, I am reminded of the forceful talk given to Medical Officers of the Armed Services during the 2nd World War by Major General Mitchener on the duties of the doctor on active service. "It is not the duty of the doctor to go buggering around on the field of battle. He may win the Victoria Cross, but if so, it will only be on the mangled and macerated remains of his comrades in arms who found him wanting in their hour of need."

We also include several articles from the U.S.A. largely on the subject of exercise physiology, and these include some extensive and most valuable bibliographies. Meanwhile Dr. Sperryn continues the laborious job of editing the Proceedings of the 1970 World Congress on Sports Medicine, which we have been promised for publication early in the New Year. These papers will comprise a large issue of the British Journal of Sports Medicine, and shall be sent of course to all our members and subscribers, and also to all who attended the Congress and paid the full Congress fees, or who were Official National Delegates to F.I.M.S.

The editorial burden of this Journal has been lightened considerably by the appointment as Assistant Editor of Dr. Elizabeth Ferris. She is already well known to all as a former International diver, but she has also had extensive experience in sporting journalism and television. A large portion of the editing of this number of B.J.S.M. has been her responsibility, and I greatly appreciate her help.

The Hon. Secretary's and Treasurer's reports, together with the accounts for 1971 are included in this issue. The high light of the Annual General Meeting, held at the Royal Society of Medicine, was the Adolph Abrahams Memorial Lecture, delivered by Prof. Ernst Jokl, of the University of Kentucky, who is unceasing in his efforts to promote sports medicine all over the world, and he was elected to Honorary Life Membership of B.A.S.M. by acclaim at the A.G.M. We met him later on in the Autumn at a symposium on sports medicine held by the University of Salford and the Salford Postgraduate Medical Institute, who held a most successful meeting with an attendance not far short of...
two hundred. Although this was not a B.A.S.M. meeting, our Chairman was asked to speak about the Association, and B.A.S.M. provided many of the speakers. The meeting was sponsored by Geigy Pharmaceuticals, who have made a significant contribution to sports medicine by this action.

This number of the Journal, containing more than twice the usual number of articles, is being published as a combined issue of Volume VI numbers 3 and 4. The delay in production of an Autumn number is regretted, and due to moving the editorial office twice in a short space of time. We shall therefore be starting Volume VII at the beginning of 1973, and shall endeavour to bring out a complete 4 number volume each calender year, but this is largely dependant upon our members and other contributors supplying us with publishable material.

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LEADING ARTICLE

In the weeks leading up to and covering the Olympic Games our readers will have become aware of an increasing tide of comment and criticism in the Press concerning the medical care of sportsmen in the United Kingdom generally and the medical arrangements for the British Olympic team in particular. In many ways these criticisms were crystallised by the Sports Editor of the Observer (Christopher Brasher, Sunday 20th August) in a detailed attack on the structure and function of the medical services of the British Olympic Association.

At a time when the leading sports nations, at least in Europe, have long since established highly effective sports sciences infra-structures it becomes increasingly apparent that our athletes and sportsmen are being unreasonably handicapped by our continuing failure to accept the implications of long term medical and team management. That this situation has arisen neither of chance nor of ignorance seems apparent from an interview with the Chief Medical Officer of the British Olympic Association published in “Medical News Tribune”, (August 21st 1972) in which an attitude is demonstrated which appears in sharp contrast to that exhibited by the Olympic Medical Services of those countries in which Sports Medicine is recognised.

We feel that the sportsmen and women of this country have the right to expect the best possible medical services to be available at Olympic level.

We would propose two simple steps which would not only translate this ideal into a reality, but do so demonstrably. Firstly, we would invite the British Olympic Association to publish a clearly defined job description in respect of the Honorary Medical Officers and the services which they are required to provide, and secondly we would further invite the British Olympic Association to fill all its offices by open public competition.