



IHC Internationale heropen wedstrijden utrecht 1977

Speech Mr. H. Bertelsmann, chairman of the Dutch
Committee.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman and members of the International Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to welcome you all on behalf of the Dutch Committee for the National and International Skill Olympics on the occasion of the opening of the 1977 edition.

This international competition is now being held for the twenty-third time and it is the second time that it has been organised by the Netherlands.

We are doing so with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we are happy to see so many people who have come here from all over the world, to take part and thus contribute to mutual understanding between the different nations. On the other hand, we are very sad to have lost, on the 26th April of this year, the man who made the organisation of these Skill Olympics possible, Mr. W.C.S. Laman Trip, co-founder and chairman for fifteen years of our Dutch Committee, and Dutch delegate - also for fifteen years - on the International Committee. We can safely say that his energy was the driving force behind the changes that have taken place within the International Committee. At this moment we are particularly aware of his absence.

I would like to extend a special welcome to you, Mr. Minister. You have given us the financial backing without which we should not have been able to organise these Skill Olympics in our country. We wish to thank the authorities for helping us to hold our annual National Skill Olympics and to organise this International Competition.

We should also like to mention the active cooperation of the national companies and, for some trades, of international companies, which have supplied us with machinery, equipment and tools for the sum of approximately 3 million guilders. Thanks to them, we can give all competitors a good and equal start.

The national bodies in charge of Vocational Training have also cooperated greatly in the organisation of this year's event. Without the enthusiasm of their members, the annual Dutch Skill Olympics and the International Competition would never have materialised. Only the combined efforts of the authorities, vocational training institutions and private companies have made this competition possible.

The Dutch educational system is in constant evolution and you, Mr. Minister, have done much to foster this. We would be the last to deny that education should mean more than training in a specific trade. On the other hand we should not underrate the value of acquiring a solid professional foundation on the basis of such training. The technical knowledge provided by Vocational Training should be accompanied by the human values that can only be transmitted through the cooperation of everyone concerned. The creation of a favourable atmosphere between the teaching institution and the company is essential to the success of this endeavour. The question as to who bears the final responsibility is, in my opinion, of minor importance and may even constitute a stumbling-block to the spirit of cooperation and to the proper acknowledgement of the participation of all concerned.

Among the international participants, I would like particularly to greet the Danish delegation, which, after a long period of absence, is now taking part once more in our Skill Olympics. Their example may well entice the other Scandinavian countries to participate next year. They can rest assured of a warm welcome! If we look back to the year 1966, the year when we organised this competition for the first time, we can see that many things have changed but that others have remained the same. We have now more countries participating and more trades in the Skill Olympics and in the accompanying Demonstrations. But we can also see that the "competitive" aspect - although it is hard to eliminate in an international competition - is beginning to yield pride of place to the increasing importance being attached to raising the overall level, rather than highlighting the present "Olympic" aspect. Another idea is also gaining importance and certainly deserves encouragement: the possibility, thanks to the International Skill Olympics, of comparing different work methods, techniques, etc.

I hope that the competitors:

- will dedicate themselves fully to carrying out the task established by the international jury;
- that, thanks to contact with young people from other countries, they will acquire experience that will prove useful in their future professional lives;
- that, when they return to their respective countries - whether near or far -, they will take with them a happy memory they will be glad to look back upon.

As for the members of the Jury, I know that they will do everything in their power to judge the test-pieces fairly.

This is a difficult task, which you perform with great care every time. I hope

that you will acquire interesting experience as a result of meeting experts from so many countries and that you will apply it to improve vocational training in your own. Merely seeing that someone else resolves a problem in a different way from oneself but reached nevertheless the same result is in itself most valuable. It is often necessary to get outside the context of one's every-day life in order to be able to see the wood for the trees.

I hope that you will all enjoy your stay here during these Skill Olympics. I am now happy to give the floor to Mr. Gamazo, Chairman of the International Committee.
