

STATSMINISTERENS TALE VED REGJERINGENS MOTTAKELSE PÅ  
AKERSHUS SLOTT I ANLEDNING VERDENSMESTERSKAPET PÅ SKI 1982  
Fredag 26. februar 1982 kl. 2000

Your Majesties,

Your Royal Highnesses,

Excellencies,

and other friends of the fascinating sport of skiing!

It is a great privilege - and an equally great pleasure - to be here today as representative of the Norwegian Government. Such is the status of skiing in this country that any Norwegian politician would indeed be

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delighted to be given the opportunity to welcome this gathering of the most outstanding representatives and friends of skiing to Akershus Castle - and especially to welcome Your Majesty King Olav, Your Majesty King Carl Gustav of Sweden, and Your Royal Highnesses the Crown Prince and Princess. You are all devotees of skiing, and so we find your presence here a very special honour.

We are on historic ground tonight. The history of Akershus Castle goes back to some time around the year 1300. A respectable age, and still it cannot compete in years with skiing as a sport in Norway. Already the vikings enjoyed skiing, when they were home on leave from their business abroad.

Many times this castle has been at the centre of international "competitions" of a less peaceful nature than today. As early as the year 1308 Akershus withstood a siege by Duke Erik of Sweden, who happened to be the son in law of the King of Norway, who reigned from here. Happy family relations, one may say! Since then the Swedes tried again and again, but <sup>always</sup> in vain, to conquer the place.

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Today we are able to add a new chapter to the Castle's history - celebrating a sporty combat in the ski tracks, and the two kings and the "combatants" meeting as friends in the castlehalls.

A World Championship is a goal for all active skiers, leaders and Ski Organizations. I assure you that the people of Norway - more than ever before - have been taking a keen interest in, and following very closely, the activities that have been taking place these days. It may even be that Norway is going to change its way of reckoning time. For years we have used the expressions "Before..."

and "After the War" as fixed concepts. From now on we will most likely say: "Before...." and "After the World Skiing Championships". Such is the intensity of the interest in the sport of skiing which, in our country, is truly the national sport.

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Norwegians are even said to have been "born with skis on their feet". Some may hold that it seems more probable that the skis are put on afterwards. But as an illustration of our interest in the sport the saying is indeed valid. It is, therefore, a particular pleasure to all Norwegians that the international ski world consented to the World Skiing Championships 1982 being arranged here.

I take this opportunity to extend a special welcome to all our friends from abroad, and also express the hope that skiing, and all other sports which bring people together from all over the world in friendly competition, will contribute to creating and furthering friendship among nations.

We have adopted a slightly nationalistic slogan in Norway, saying: Ski the Nor-way! Tonight I should rather say: Welcome the Nor-Way! That is to say: Skál, the Nor-Way!