

“Under such conditions they would be doomed to failure, which would be a blow to the prestige of the organizing country. On the other hand were this country to renounce the Games too late to give the International Olympic Committee the possibility of transferring them elsewhere, then there would fall on the Organizing Committee the responsibility for having prevented the participation in the Games of 1940 of thousands of young persons who have been preparing themselves since the Berlin Games, and for certain of whom this will be the only chance that they will have in their lives.

“In both cases enormous injury would be caused to the spreading of the Olympic idea, and not only Japan but all Asia would for years be deprived of reaping the moral benefits which the countries draw from this glorious display.

“Japan, I am certain, is too loyal to the Olympic cause not to appreciate her duty and to deliver such an injury to the admirable work of Baron de Coubertin.

“Let us hope that peace will soon be reestablished and that, through the happy interpretation of sport, concord and harmony will be restored among the youth of the world.”

#### 4. — Ceremony at Olympia

On the conclusion of the Session of the International Olympic Committee the members proceeded to Greece to assist at the ceremony of the burial of the heart of Baron de Coubertin at Olympia.

On arrival at Athens they were welcomed by the members of the Greek Olympic Committee and were entertained to tea at the Court. H. M. King George III, the Princesses of the Royal House, also Hereditary Prince Paul and Princess Frederica conversed at length with the members of the International Olympic Committee. Thanks to M. Bolanachi, member for Greece, the members of the International Olympic Committee before leaving for Olympia on Friday, March 25th, had the opportunity of attending a parade in connection with the National Fête. Accompanied by Hereditary Prince Paul they travelled by special rail-autocar in the afternoon to Olympia. The next morning they host visited the museum.

The ceremony took place at 10.0 a.m.

The International Olympic Committee and the Greek Olympic Committee being drawn up on the two sides of the column, Count Bertier de Sauvigny supported by Count Mercati and the Minister for Public Instruction advanced bearing the urn containing the heart of Baron de Coubertin. He deposited it on a small altar in front of the monument.

Count Mercati, Marshal of the Court, delivered the following address:

Monseigneur,

It is with a profound and sacred emotion that, trustee of the last wish of an old and dear friend, I have the honour to place in the hands of your Royal Highness, and through them in the hands of Greece, the urn containing his heart, the heart of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the inspired reviver of the International Olympic Games, the great friend of Greece, the noble son of France.

A great and noble heart, always burning with the ardent flame of his love for Greece, a homage that he always preserved even in periods difficult and inauspicious for this country.

Pierre de Coubertin who never doubted the future and destiny of Greece, became the apostle and defender of her historic rights, rights imprescriptibly based on the moral force and glory of Hellenism, in which he had an unshakeable faith.

It may be that at this very moment, under its cover of marble, the heart of our great and never to be forgotten President throbs and thrills with joy, feeling that it is with a pious thankfulness and as a precious relic that we are about to preserve it in the midst of these sacred ruins which inspired his exalted idea, and that it will be interred by your Royal Highness, son of our great and glorious King Constantine in whose hands Pierre de Coubertin first placed in 1895 that which was most precious to him: the noble inspiration of his genius, the immortal flower of his soul, his work, the revival of the Olympic Games; a work for ever glorious and eternal.

Count de Bertier de Sauvigny then read a message from Baroness de Coubertin:

The constant witness of the efforts and of the great achievements of the mission of Pierre de Coubertin should also be witness of the final consecration of his heart on the same soil from which its inspiration sprang!

Deeply grieved that I am not able to reunite with his colleagues and friends, I am desirous at least of presenting my deeply moved thanks to the Royal Government of Greece for its willingness to receive and shelter in this sacred spot the heart which beat for the high Hellenic ideal and which it sought to revive in the modern Olympiads.

Then, in the name of M. de Coubertin I would thank all those who followed and assisted him. In the first place those who despite a general scepticism were the first to believe in the success of such an enterprise, those who on the occasion of his first visit to Athens in 1894 and encouraged by H. R. H. Prince Constantine constituted the first National Olympic Committee and prepared the splendid inaugural Games of 1896 in the stadium renovated by Averoff.

We will not forget the seven members, who after the vote obtained by M. de Coubertin at the Sorbonne consented to form a first International Committee: the patriot and great Greek writer Bikélas, Colonel Balk, Mr. William Sloane, Dr. Gebhardt, General Boutowsky, M. Kémény and especially M. Jiri Guth-Jarkovsky, the so esteemed survivor of this initial phalanx.

The torch has passed from the hands of the Renovator into hands which hold it high and which will pass it on to others. Its flame kindled at the hearth of the most noble civilization will never be extinguished, and the sap of Hellenism which has very specially fertilised the illustrious soil of Olympia will continue as the Renovator wished to permeate the Olympic Games of modern times.

Baroness de Coubertin.

The Minister of Culture, M. C. Georgacopoulos, then spoke:

Your Highness,

It is with profound emotion that Greece today receives the noble heart of Baron Pierre de Coubertin to deposit it in the enclosure of the sacred Altis.

At this solemn moment when our thoughts speed back to those unforgettable days of the rebirth of the Olympic Games, I beg your Royal Highness to be so good as to permit me to retrace briefly, in token of pious homage to their venerated reviver, the efforts which he displayed for the realisation of this great work which was the aim of his life.

From his youth Baron de Coubertin experienced the desire to consecrate all his forces to the service of patriotic, humanitarian and sublime ideals. A profound student of the history of ancient Greece, with deep knowledge of the public and private life of the ancients Greeks, he was a convinced adherent of the Platonic doctrine: "The State should devote its care to the education of the citizens".

The study of the pedagogic methods and systems of instruction then in vogue in France made him recognise the necessity for a great reform which would bring into harmony the culture of the spirit and the culture of the body. Seeking the proper solution to the problems that were posed, he studied pedagogic methods of that time and especially those introduced into England by Thomas Arnold. Thus he came to the conclusion that an international recognition of the high importance of agonistics for the health of adolescents was necessary. Like a modern Iphitos, Baron de Coubertin — animated by the same solitudes as he who was the first in history to revive the Olympic Games — envisaged the Olympic idea, inspired by the Pythian oracle, as the sole means of satisfying his noble aspirations, and from that moment he became the enlightened apostle of his noble idealism.

Thanks to his untiring efforts he succeeded in having convoked in Paris on the 16th of June, 1894, the first Athletic Congress, which decided on the celebration of the 1st International Olympiad at Athens.

Greece enthusiastically accepted this decision.

Despite technical and financial difficulties, and thanks to our great King Constantine, then heir to the throne of Greece, all these difficulties were overcome and the first Olympic Games were celebrated with great success in April, 1896, in the Panathenaean stadium.

From that moment the sublime inspiration of this noble son of France became the ideal of all civilized nations, and the International Olympiads have followed each other with ever increasing success, an ever more glorious splendour.

In these last year the youth of the whole world, manifesting its progress in "strength and speed", forms ties of friendship and respect inspired by the sublime institution of the Olympic spirit; and the attention of all humanity is directed on the Olympic Stadium, forgetful for the time of its customary preoccupations and living in an elevated spiritual atmosphere, the only one susceptible to the cultivation and development of the spirit of peace.

Pierre de Coubertin!

The great aim to which you consecrated your life has been realised, thanks to the faith which animated your struggles for your noble ideal. Now that you rest in peace, your noble soul will feel the greatest happiness there can be, that of having given humanity a higher ideal.

Your heart is at this moment deposited on the sacred soil of Olympia, which receives it tenderly, for you were its inspired offspring. A block of white Hellenic marble — such as those from which Phidias, Praxiteles, Polycleus and Scopas knew how to create their master-pieces — will for ever mark your illumined passage in this world and will consecrate the memory of your struggles for the Olympic Games.

Soon the ancient stadium of Olympia, now being excavated by the German School of Archaeology, will see the light again and the Olympic Games will soon be celebrated there. Your heart, which has caused the most noble cords of our soul to vibrate, will rest near the Altis and the Stadium, sacred sites which in their serene grandeur were the cradle of your life's idealism. When the sacred olive branches are presented to the young Olympic athletes, those who continue the great work will not fail to place piously a similar olive branch on your monument. Today a grateful Greece and the entire world, faithful to your ideal, and represented at this moment by the members of the International Committee of the Olympic Games, these modern Hellanodikai and Nomophylaces, bow piously before your memory which will live throughout eternity.

When the heart of Baron de Coubertin had been blessed by the priest, Count de Baillet-Latour, President of the International Olympic Committee, bade a last farewell to Baron de Coubertin in these words:

Monseigneur,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies,  
Gentlemen,  
My dear colleagues,

Profoundly affected by the death of Pierre de Coubertin and desirous of conforming with his last wishes, you have come to Olympia to place his heart in the monument erected to commemorate his memory.

It will rest here for eternity near the spot where those who were the founders of the Games of Greece in the epoch of her splendour sleep their last sleep, and not far from the site where is lit the torch that goes to bear the sacred fire to the stadia.

Henceforth when the latter reawakes in the heart of youth the enthusiasm for the Olympic idea it will at the same time revive the memory of the name of him who was one of the great benefactors of humanity and did more than all others for the cause of peace and good understanding between men of all races and all religions.

Farewell, Pierre de Coubertin. May thy soul rest in peace.

Then the Diadoch, President of the Greek Olympic Committee, placed the heart in the socle of the monument erected in honour of Baron de Coubertin.

The ceremony, at which all the inhabitants of the region took part, was simple but impressive.

The members of the International Committee and of the Greek Olympic Committee subsequently visited the new German excavations carried out under the direction of Dr. Kunze.

On the return journey the peasants had gathered at every station to pay honour to their beloved Hereditary Prince, Honorary President of the Greek Olympic Committee.

The XXXVth Session concluded with the ceremony at Olympia.

