

BY THE WAY

with Bill Henry

Following article has appeared in the paper Los Angeles Times and has been communicated to us by our member J. J. Garland:

Washington. — Once upon a time there was a very intelligent young man by the name of Pierre de Coubertin—who invariably comes to mind whenever the troubles of the United Nations bob into the headlines.

International. — Pierre de Coubertin is dead now, and his major legacy to the world is the Olympic Games and, lacking very much knowledge of either the man or his work, the average person dismisses him as a character essentially belonging on the sports page. But Pierre de Coubertin, who had his human frailties, was also something of a genius. Among other things to ponder as he lived out his life at Mon Repos, in Lausanne, just across Lake Geneva from the shimmering palaces of the dying League of Nations, de Coubertin could say that if the founders of the league had done as he did, the league might have lasted.

Organization. — De Coubertin's International Olympic Committee, which included as many nations as the league or the U. N., faced much the same problems, of which the greatest was supernationalism. De Coubertin, with no experience to guide him, realized that if any international organization is to

continue to function, its basic principle must be to place the welfare of all ahead of the welfare of any one or any few. He foresaw that many national groups would be drawn toward the Olympic Games without having very much understanding of the basic idea and, in addition, would be struggling for their own national prestige and advantage.

Solution. — His solution was based on the principle that the top body of the Olympic Games must be trustee of the Olympic ideals. He foresaw that if the body was to be composed of men elected by the various nations, each man would, in the last analysis, put his country's good ahead of the welfare of the Olympic Games. He was quite frank to say that, as originally constituted, the International Olympic Committee was composed of a lot of friends who just went along with him and followed his ideas. Gradually he added to their number persons from various countries who understood the idea of trusteeship. To someone who characterized the original International Olympic Committee as « esthetes and athletic officials » de Coubertin said they were neither because « the latter lack brains as the former lack muscles. »

System. — The method of selection is simple—the members of the I. O. C. choose their fellow members, being careful to speci-

fy that, for example, M. Garland does not represent the United States on the International Olympic Committee but rather that M. Garland, a citizen of the United States, acts as the representative of the International Olympic Committee in the

United States. There's quite a distinction there. For example, if it is obviously for the good of the Olympic Games to hold them in London, Mr. Garland doesn't feel that he must vote to hold them in the United States.