

Speech of Mr. Angelo Bolanaki

*delivered at the solemn opening ceremony of the 49th session at Athens
on May 10th 1953*

Sire,

On behalf of my colleagues, I beg to express to your Majesty their deep appreciation for the keen interest that your Majesty has always taken in their work as well as in doing us the honour to officiate at the Opening Ceremony of this Session.

I address myself to you, my dear colleagues, in my capacity of doyen of the International Olympic Committee as well as member of the Hellenic Olympic Committee. The latter also figures as the oldest National Olympic Committee.

Above all, I wish to thank you for having accepted with such enthusiasm, two years ago at Helsinki, the invitation extended by the city of Athens, asking you to hold the annual Session of the I. O. C. in a land so rich in olympic tradition and memories.

I can therefore assure you that on this memorable day, my compatriots are moved by the same emotion which thrilled our predecessors on the occasion of the Session of the first Congress of the Revival of the Olympic Games, which was held at the Sorbonne on the 27th of June 1894, when Pierre de Coubertin, the great friend of

Hellenism, solemnly proclaimed the opening of the Session.

Greece will never forget it !

The Hellenic Olympic Committee also desires that today should be marked by the solemn Opening, at Athens, of the 49th Session of the International Olympic Committee, thus celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Revival of the Games. This in the presence of His Majesty, its Honorary President, son of the late King Constantine who was one of the original promoter of the Olympic idea. On this occasion, let us, dear colleagues, pay tribute to the glory of King Constantine and Pierre de Coubertin.

In conclusion, it is my earnest wish that all of you who are by tradition steeped in the Olympic ideal and who, while at work during this Session are inspired by this land, the cradle of Olympism, may carry back home when you leave this land, as many happy memories as those felt by our predecessors on the occasion of the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary. This memorable Ceremony was also held in Athens in 1934, on the occasion of the 31st Session of our Committee in the IIIrd Year of the 10th Olympiad.

