

THE MEMBERS OF THE I.O.C.

(Circular-letter to members of the I.O.C. from Avery Brundage, President International Olympic Committee, January, 1954.)

The one thing, perhaps, that has contributed most to the success of the Olympic Movement is the manner in which the International Olympic Committee, which is in charge of the Movement, was constituted by its farsighted founder, Baron de Coubertin. The members of the original committee were chosen personally by him. They were selected for their devotion to the Olympic Movement, and they were considered ambassadors from the Committee to their countries. They were generally independent and had no political connections. They were chosen because their viewpoint was an international one, and because they were free from economic and political pressure. They could be counted on to support whatever was for the interest of the Olympic Movement even against their own country or the particular sport or sports in which they had a personal interest. The Committee was made self-perpetuating. No system could have been devised that would better insure the success of the Olympic Movement.

At the beginning, in many cases, these members then organized the National Olympic Committee in their countries, thus establishing fidelity to Olympic principles. For fifty years there was no deviation from these principles laid down by the founder. Members of the Committee were very carefully selected and their first loyalty was always to the Olympic Movement itself. It was the man and not the country he came from that counted. No more than three could be selected from the same country and the important thing was the character of the individual and *not the land of his birth*.

It was difficult at times to explain the necessity for this method of organization as interest in the Olympic Movement grew and spread around the world. Countries

new to the Movement wanted to know why they were not represented on the Committee. Nations with a democratic or republican form of government insisted that they should select their representative on the Committee. Sometimes they have gone so far as to name a certain individual and tell the Committee they would recognize no other. Some of older members will remember the efforts of Hitler and others to place their men on the Committee. In the United States, and in other countries, the method of constitution of the Committee was denounced as being archaic, non-democratic and objectionable. Ignoring the fact that all these complaints were unwarranted (the Olympic Games soon lose all their purpose if they were controlled by a committee composed of members striving to advance the interests of their own countries instead of the Olympic Movement itself), their number gradually began to have some effect on the Committee which, in the last few years has seemed at least partially to lose sight of the necessity of conforming strictly to the fundamental principle established by Baron de Coubertin, that it is the man and not the country that is important. My firm conviction is that, unless we adhere firmly to this basic philosophy we are courting disaster.

The care exercised in the selection of the individuals who composed the I.O.C. produced members who, no matter where they came from or what their language, were of the same general type and they were soon welded into what has so often been called the « Olympic Family », a group of men that thought and acted practically unanimously on all important subjects. And on all basic or fundamental questions concerning the Olympic Movement the I.O.C. should act as a unit.

It is only since the last world war that there has been talk of « an European Bloc », « a Latin Bloc », « a Bloc from the East », « a Western Hemisphere Bloc », « a British Empire Bloc », etc., in the membership of the I.O.C. Certainly this has not developed to any very serious extent as yet, but the very fact that such blocs have been mentioned indicates that something has gone awry. *There must be no blocs and there must be no nationalism in the International Olympic Committee.*

Today there are over 80 National Olympic Committees recognized by the I.O.C. and each one of these countries would like to have a member on the Committee. At this writing there are more than a score of different nations that have asked to have a member or an additional member chosen from among their citizens. It is difficult indeed for one South American country to understand why there are members on the International Olympic Committee from their neighboring countries and none from it. It is the same in Europe and other sections of the globe. The feeling is so strong in some countries that it is considered a national slight if there is no I.O.C. member and this is not a happy state of affairs. Unless we adhere to the principles so wisely laid down by Baron de Coubertin, however, and unless the I.O.C. is preserved as an « Olympic Family » composed of members who are entirely free from economic or political considerations, and devoted primarily to the Olympic Movement the Committee will lose its strength, its power, its influence, and its usefulness. On the other hand we cannot have a score or more of dissatisfied countries. What is the answer ?

To allow countries to select their representatives on the Committee would be fatal. Political considerations would soon control and all the good work of the last sixty years would be destroyed. It is undesirable to increase the size of the Committee much beyond its present number for reasons of efficiency. If there were only one member from each of the over eighty countries recognized the size of the Committee would already be too large, and our present rules provide that there may be as many as three from the same nation.

(Ed. : Since this circular-letter has been written the Athens' Session has taken the following resolution : « In future, the I.O.C. will be represented in the various countries by one or two members at the most. The countries which have three members at the present time will retain them but the third member will not be replaced ».)

The question of the necessity of annual meetings has been raised because of the time required and the resulting expense to members. Perhaps there may not always be enough business to warrant calling the members together every year, but it must be remembered that the meetings have also a certain value in propagating the Olympic

philosophy in the countries in which they are held and in the world generally.

Instead of so many meetings of the I.O.C. itself, it has been suggested that more work be delegated to the Executive Committee, but under the rules it is the I.O.C. that must assign these duties and I am sure the I.O.C. is not willing to yield too much of its authority.

Sixty percent of our members at present, 42 out of 70, were elected since the I.O.C.'s first meeting after the War, in 1946 and some of them have attended only a few meetings. For that reason I recommended at the session in Mexico last year that no new members be elected until this report could be completed and studied.

I have the following recommendations to make :

1. The I.O.C. must select its own members. Regardless of national pressure for recognition, it must firmly adhere to this fundamental principle and refuse to permit members to be placed on it by any country. It is difficult or impossible for a man to ignore his sponsorship and members must be free from obligations or ties of any kind. Since membership on the I.O.C. is a great honor and since it is for life the I.O.C. should make a very careful independent investigation before electing anyone. Members chosen should be preferably leaders in their own country with considerable knowledge and experience of amateur sport, men of strong character, national prestige, international understanding and an independent spirit.
2. While it would be better to have all members from the same country if they were qualified than to accept unqualified members from other countries, I believe with time and care we can find qualified members from most participating nations. In order to cover as wide an area as possible I recommend that no more than one member be chosen from the same country, except that there may be one additional member in countries where because of size and population and great interest and participation in the Games it seems to be advisable.
3. For efficient operation the Committee should not have more than 75 or 80 members and a careful analysis indicates that if recommendation No. 2 is adopted this will be ample to permit the I.O.C. to be represented in all sections of the world.
4. Members should have a knowledge of French or English, the official languages, and preferably both.
5. The rule on attendance should be strictly enforced in all cases, except if there is a valid reason when there is more than one member from a country.
6. In the future members should be chosen

only if they live in the country of which they are a citizen.

7. No alternates or substitutes should be permitted and no votes by proxy.
8. The meetings of the I.O.C. should be closed to outsiders without exception.
9. Circular letters should be sent to the members at frequent intervals in order to keep them informed.
10. Sub-committees to study important problems should be appointed when advisable.
11. Full and complete minutes should be kept of all meetings. (registered records.)
12. Written releases to the Press should be issued whenever necessary or useful.
13. The following changes in the statutes are recommended :
 - Rule 10 — Before being elected to honorary membership, members must have attended at least ten meetings.
 - Rule 13 — Enlarge the Executive Committee to 7 members.
 - Rule 19 — A quorum shall be 25, not 15.

Rule 20 — Increase the members that must vote from 15 to 35.

Rule 21 — Add the provision that there must be at least 25 favorable votes.

(Ed. : All precedent proposals Nr. 1 to 13 have been adopted at the Athens' (Session in 1954.)

14. The following exhibits are attached :

- A) Countries that have participated in Olympic Games since 1896.
- B) Nationality of members of the I.O.C.
- C) Summary.

EXHIBIT « A »

(See table in French text.)

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EXHIBIT « B »

(See table in French text.)

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EXHIBIT « C »

(See table in French text.)

TABLE « A »

Liste des pays ayant participé aux Jeux olympiques depuis 1896 :

Afghanistan	Danemark	Italie	Portugal
Allemagne	Egypte	Jamaïque	Rhodésie
Argentine	Equateur	Japon	Roumanie
Australie	Espagne	(Lettonie)	Russie (U.R.S.S.)
Autriche	(Estonie)	Liban	Salvador
Bahama	Finlande	Liechtenstein	Sarre
Belgique	France	(Lituanie)	Singapour
Bermudes	Grande-Bretagne	Luxembourg	Sud-Afrique
Bolivie	Grèce	Malte	Suède
Bésil	Guatemala	Mexique	Suisse
Bulgarie	Guinée brit.	Monaco	Syrie
Canada	Haïti	Nigeria	Tchécoslovaquie
Ceylan	Hollande	Norvège	(Slov. et Bohême)
Chili	Hong-Kong	N.-Zélande	Thailand
Chine	Hongrie	Pakistan	Trinité
Colombie	Indes	(Palestine)	Turquie
Corée	Indonésie	Panama	Uruguay
Costa-Rica	Irak	Paraguay	U.S.A.
Cote-d'Or	Iran	Pérou	Venezuela
Cuba	Irlande	Philippines	Viet-Nam
Curaçao	Islande	Pologne	Yougoslavie
(Indes néerl.)	Israël	Porto-Rico	

TABLE « B »

Les membres du Comité international olympique sont issus des pays suivants :

6 d'Argentine	4 de Finlande	5 de Norvège
5 d'Australie	11 de France	1 du Pakistan
6 d'Autriche	13 d'Allemagne	2 de Perse
6 de Belgique	6 de Grèce	2 du Pérou
4 du Brésil	14 de Grande-Bretagne	1 des Philippines
4 de Bulgarie	4 de Hollande	4 de Pologne
5 du Canada	5 de Hongrie	3 du Portugal
1 de l'Amérique Centr.	1 d'Islande	2 de Roumanie
1 du Guatemala	3 des Indes	6 de Russie
1 du Panama	2 d'Irlande	2 d'U.R.S.S.
5 du Chili	12 d'Italie	4 d'Afrique du Sud
3 de Chine	8 du Japon	8 d'Espagne
1 de Colombie	1 de Lettonie	5 de Suède
3 de Cuba	1 du Lebanon (Palest.)	3 de Suisse
2 de Tchécoslovaquie	1 du Liechtenstein	3 de Turquie
5 du Danemark	2 du Luxembourg	2 d'Uruguay
1 de l'Equateur	6 du Mexique	15 des Etats-Unis
2 d'Egypte	2 de Monaco	1 du Venezuela
2 d'Estonie	6 de Nouv.-Zélande	3 de Yougoslavie

soit 237 membres de 56 pays différents

TABLE « C »

R É S U M É

	<i>Nations ayant participé</i>	<i>Nations ayant participé en 1952</i>	<i>Nations ayant des membres</i>	<i>Nations ayant eu des membres</i>	<i>Total des membres actuels</i>
EUROPE	33	29	26	30	39
AMÉRIQUE	26	18	11	15	16
ASIE	19	16	6	7	10
AFRIQUE	5	4	2	2	2
AUSTRALIE	2	2	2	2	3
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* 85		69	47	56	70

* 4 nations n'existant pas actuellement.

* 4 nations no longer in existence.

* 4 países que actualmente no existen.