

## **Correspondence concerning the Games of the XIth Olympiad in Berlin in 1936 and the Chancellor of the Third Reich**

As the result of a statement made by Lord Aberdare, Member of the I.O.C. for Great-Britain which was published in our Bulletin N° 50 the newspaper "Sport" of Zurich in his issue N° 53, published a paragraph in which it is asked who, at the time, intervened with the I.O.C. to state to the Committee the desiderata of the hitlerian regime.

Dr. Karl Ritter von Halt, the actual

member of the I.O.C. for Germany has kindly replied to "Sport" relating to this matter and has given us his consent to publish his letter, the contents of which are almost historical and which will, no doubt, be of great interest to our readers.

Herewith are its contents :

"In 1931 the I.O.C. attributed the organizing of the Games of the XIth Olympiad

of 1936 to the city of Berlin, and it was in the course of the Vienna Session that the Winter Olympic Games of this same year were attributed to Garmisch-Partenkirchkn.

On that same occasion, the I.O.C. expressed the wish that S.E. Th. Lewald, member of the I.O.C. for Germany should be appointed Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the Berlin Games and that I, the underwriter, (also a member of the I.O.C. Ed.) should be elected Chairman of the organizing Committee for the Garmisch Games. When the National-Socialistic party seized power, there were attempts to dismiss of their posts both Dr. Lewald as well as myself, with a view of appointing the "Reichsportführer" of those days : von Tschammer and Osten in our places.

As the direct result of this fact, both S. E. Th. Lewald and myself sent a letter to the President of the I.O.C., Count de Baillet-Latour, begging him to intervene. The latter went immediately to Berlin and had an interview with Hitler. In our presence, he declared to Hitler that the I.O.C. was keeping to its decision, namely that both the Berlin Games and the Garmisch Games had to be convened by S. E. Lewald and myself respectively. Only in this way could the I.O.C. be fully assured that the Games would be run on the lines dictated in its fundamental principles.

In the event of any alteration happening to these two presidential posts, the I.O.C. would withdraw the Games from Berlin and Garmisch and attribute them to other towns. Hitler complied with Count de Baillet-Latour's wish.

Another incident which shows the remarkable courage of our regretted former President is the following :

Immediately before the official Opening of the Winter Games at Garmisch Count de Baillet-Latour and I came across Hitler in a hall. The Count went up to him and

told him "I beg you to consider yourself here at the Olympic Games as well as later on in the Berlin Games, as a guest and not as the organizer: the I.O.C. is the directive power and organizer of the Games, it watches that the Games are kept free of all political propaganda and are run in conformity with its Statutes. Furthermore. I beg you to know that on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony, you need pronounce one sentence only. While uttering these words, Count de Baillet-Latour handed to Hitler a sheet of paper on which the said phrase was typewritten. Hitler replied "Count, I shall take the trouble to learn this sentence by heart !"

I would like to relate another episode which happened in Berlin in 1936 between Hitler and our President : On the first day of the Games, not at Hitler's wish, the "Reichsportführer" brought up to Hitler's lodge, the three winners of individual events, where they received the congratulations of the Führer for their victory. Count de Baillet-Latour witnessed this incident with disapproval. At the onset of the second day of the Games, he came up to me very much concerned, begging me to put a stop to such receptions, as they were contrary to the Protocol of the I.O.C. I asked the Count to accompany me to Hitler's lodge where in a very angry tone, he begged the Chancellor of the Third Reich to forgo these receptions as they were not conform to the olympic Protocol. Hitler excused himself and afterwards received only German winners in a place near-by his lodge."

I was keen to give you these authentic and first hand information in order to let you understand that the I.O.C., both at Garmisch and in Berlin, never allowed itself to be influenced and that all its interventions have been most successful.

*Dr. Karl Ritter von Halt*