

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

HOW THE STRUCTURE OF THE I. O. C. WAS ERECTED

De Coubertin said "A few days after the closing ceremony of the Congress (at the Sorbonne on June 23rd 1894, *Ed.*) Mr. Sloane (U. S. A.), Mr. E. Callot (France) and I foregathered at the pied-à-terre of Mr. Bikelas (Greece), in Rue de Babylone in Paris. It is there that the foundations and the welding of the structure of the I. O. C. were laid. Bikelas refused to become its President. I stressed the necessity for a mobile Presidency which would fall by rights to the nation where the next Olympiad was to be held. Thus Bikelas would only be in office till the end of 1896, after which time I would succeed him and be in charge for a period of four years. In the interim, I would carry out the duties of "General Secretary" which entail more interesting work than most of the presidencies. For, these offices constitute the mainsprings of an active administration."

It is known that, Bikelas remained in office as President for two years when, in 1896, de Coubertin succeeded him and retained the Presidency till 1925, the date when he retired. In the meantime the rules applicable to the duration of the president's mandate had been altered.

DE COUBERTIN'S CONCEPTION ON THE SELECTIVITY OF THE MEMBERS

1894: "The I. O. C. is composed of three concentric circles : firstly, a small nucleus of converts active and staunch supporters, secondly, a "nursery" of members full of goodwill and capable of learning, thirdly, a "facade" of people who are more or less capable of being turned to good account but whose presence satisfy national exigencies while giving prestige "to the whole."

In 1911, the situation had already evolved, since de Coubertin wrote further on this same subject :

"All the members were sportsmen in the true sense of the word, answering thus the formula which I had conceived right from the very beginning. (Only one member remains of this period, namely Mr. Angelo Bolanaki, member for Greece and elected in 1910, *Ed.*) I needed men sufficiently capable, to examine thoroughly any special problem but though adequate, aloof of all exclusive specialisation in order not to become slaves to it ; men sufficiently internationally minded not to become influenced by their own national prejudices when dealing with any international problem. In conclusion, I needed strong-minded men capable to hold their own against certain groups and who would be sure to be free of all kinds of material dependence from the latter.

APPEARANCE OF THE FIRST MARATHON RACE, THE CONTEST OF WHICH WAS RECORDED ON THE OLYMPIC PROGRAMME EVER SINCE 1896

An illustrious member of the French Institute, Mr. Michel Bréal, shortly after the revival of the Games, in an outburst of enthusiasm, wrote to de Coubertin, promising to offer a cup if this sport appeared on the programme. Let us add that this Marathon race outdid in daring all the audacities of the time and was likely to be thought unreasonable by the specialists themselves.

This contest took place nevertheless and was won, history tells us by a Greek shepherd Spiridion Louys, who knew nothing of the methods of scientific training. He prepared himself by fasting and praying, and spent his last night before the contest, in prayer before the icones illuminated by candles. He won the race without effort.

FROM WHAT SOURCE THE I. O. C. DID TAKE ITS MOTTO :

CITIUS - ALTIUS - FORTIUS ?

It came from Rev. Father Didon, Prior at Arcueil College in Normandy, who proposed this motto at the time to his pupils.

THE OLYMPIC FLAG :

It appeared for the first time in public, in Paris in 1914, on the occasion of the XXth Anniversary of the Revival of the Olympic Games. It was flown for the first time at the Antwerp Games in 1920 (VIIth Olympiad).

HOW LONG HAS THE CHANCELLERY OF THE I. O. C. BEEN RESIDING IN LAUSANNE ?

On April 10th 1915, de Coubertin and the Mayor of Lausanne, Mr. Maillifer, set their names to the document stipulating that this town was to be the world's administrative Centre, its archives were to be kept in the renovated Olympic Museum. Baron de Blonay, member of the I. O. C. for Switzerland, attended this ceremony which took place in the town-hall.

THE 1920 GAMES

Is it known that the city of Lyon had sent her candidature for the allocation of the Games for the VIIth Olympiad, but that by an act of deed signed by Mr. Herriot, Mayor of the city, she withdrew her candidature in favour of Antwerp, candidate town ever since 1914 ? We are in the position to state that this withdrawal had been strongly advocated by de Coubertin !

THE OLYMPIC FLAG WAS FLOWN AT SAN-FRANCISCO IN 1915

One of the organizers of the San-Francisco's Exhibition, in 1915, happened to be present at the Stockholm Games in 1912, where he became greatly impressed by the contests of

Modern Pentathlon. Unable to organize the Games at San Francisco in 1915, he applied for the patronage of the I. O. C. for a Pentathlon contest which was to be incorporated in the Exhibition's Programme. Consequently, on March 18th 1915, the Olympic flag was flown over the big parade ground of this manifestation. Mr. Allison Armour, member of the I. O. C. for U. S. A. was commissioned to represent the I. O. C. at San Francisco.

This homage to the I. O. C. excited universal interest at the time, and caused a happy repercussion in the Philippines where the United States of America were endeavouring to foist the love of sport.

THE FIRST EXECUTIVE COMMISSION
IN THE I. O. C.

Upon the initiative of Baron de Coubertin, the I. O. C. in 1921, approved of the motion to create an Executive Commission (or Board) this virtually confirmed a situation which already existed. The Executive Commission commenced to function on October 1st 1921 and was composed of the following members : Baron Godefroy de Blonay, Dr. Jiri Guth-Jarkowsky, Comte de Baillet-Latour, Mr. J. S. Edström and Marquis Melchior de Polignac.