

The Marquess of Exeter writes on

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE,
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS
AND THE NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES**

It has been apparent for some time that many engaged in the administration of world sport are a little uncertain of the exact relationship between the International Olympic Committee, International Federations and National Olympic Committees. This relationship has at times engendered some heat and, as I have a foot in all three camps as a Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee, President of an International Federation and Chairman of our Olympic Council, it struck me that I might be permitted to write on this subject without being considered prejudiced.

The International Olympic Committee

Firstly, many in the world of sport do not seem to be aware that countries do not appoint members of the International Olympic Committee ; the Committee itself elects members in the countries to represent *it* in *their* country. The International Olympic Committee was formed to recreate the Games and the Games belong to it. It brought in a partner — the International Federations (who through their members control the competitors) — to take complete control of the technical side of their sport. It reserves to itself, and indeed always must, the responsibility for the maintenance of the Olympic ideals together with control of the Opening and Closing of the Games, the presentation of medals, and other general and non-technical functions.

The Olympic Games have a far deeper meaning than a series of world championships. They hold a unique position in the world and the high idealism which is their corner stone, and the message of hope which they give, have a very real value in a world where even the most stouthearted at times must despair of world wide understanding and good-will.

The International Federations

The International Federations have a permanent all the year round task in the problems connected with international control of their sport in the world, naturally though of course in most cases by far the most important function of the four-year period is the Olympic Games. This control is absolute and is applied through their Officers, Council and Congress.

The line of demarcation, therefore, between the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations in the Olympic Games seems to be quite clear. Everything to do with the organization and control of sport is the function of the International Federation ; everything to do with the general arrangements of the Games, the ceremonial, the decision as to which sport will be included in the Games, which countries asked, and such general rules as the basic ones on amateurism, are the responsibility of the International Olympic Committee.

Meetings incidentally are held at least every other year between the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee and the delegates of the International Federations to discuss general problems affecting all sport in the world. Although it is of course impossible for a binding decision to be taken at such meetings on matters outside the Olympic Games, for International Federations are individually completely autonomous in their normal activities, yet it is the highest forum in the world of sport, and provides a most useful medium for an exchange of ideas and suggestions, and the development of common lines of policy for recommendation to their International Federations for the well-being of amateur sport in the world.

The International Olympic Committee and the International Federations therefore are in a great partnership in the Olympic Games.

The National Olympic Committees

The National Olympic Committees come into a rather different category, for they are the child of both. Their rules have to be approved by the International Olympic Committee, the members of the International Olympic Committee in the countries are automatically members of them, and it is their task to cherish the flame of the Olympic ideal in their country. On the other hand under the International Olympic Committee Rules, the control of these National Olympic Committees is vested in the representatives of the members of the International Federations.

A National Olympic Committee's first task obviously is to raise the finance necessary to send its team to the Games and to arrange the housing, equipping and transport of the team. It is also the channel through which the entries for the Games are collected, and approved from the non-technical angle, before being passed over to the International Federations for the particular sport. Although it does not nick individuals from the different sports, clearly if there are, for financial or other reasons, only a limited number of vacancies in a team, it must decide between the claims of the various sports. It has too, with the passing years, become the custom in many countries to use the medium of the National Olympic Committee to hold meetings of the National Federations to discuss problems of mutual interest outside the Olympic Games, and speak therefore on behalf of competitive sport in their country to their government and other parties.

Finance

Apart from the Organizing Committee which has considerable difficulty in making ends meet, National Olympic Committees by the nature of their task have of course to raise far more money than anyone else. This

is done in some countries by Government grants, in others by receipts from the football pools and in some, like my own, by public appeals. On the occasion of the Melbourne Games the sums required must have amounted to several million pounds, for in my own country alone it has been in the nature of £150,000. The very fact that this money can thus be raised shows the enormous public interest which is aroused by the Games.

The other interested bodies, the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations, have no such advantage. The International Olympic Committee has no funds of its own other than the fee which is charged when the Games are allotted, and the subscriptions from its members. There is much highly valuable work which should be done by the Committee but sheer lack of funds makes it impossible for it to be undertaken. Indeed there is no doubt that the Chancellor too is hard pressed to carry out the work of the Chancellery on the very limited funds available, and the President of the International Olympic Committee keeps a large office at his own expense to deal with the host of problems which descend on him. This obviously is not only completely wrong and unfair on them, but it is also not in the best interests of the Olympic Movement.

Almost every International Federation too is continually under great financial pressure. Indeed it was found that one of the great Federations' secretary had advanced a considerable sum from his own pocket to assure that the proper administrative arrangements were available at the Congress in Melbourne. This clearly too is an intolerable situation.

It has seemed to me for some time past that where the Olympic Games are in that year the World Championships of an International Federation, clearly the Federation should receive some financial recompense, as it would expect this World Championship otherwise to be one of its chief sources of revenue. It was with this in mind that I proposed to the International Olympic Committee in Melbourne that a stamp of 5% should be put on tickets at the Games to provide these vital funds 2 ½ % to go to the International Olympic Committee and 2 ½ % to the International Federation concerned in the particular sport. This sum would make an enormous difference to the work of the International Olympic Committee and to the health and activities of International Federations, and yet would not be large enough to interfere with the sale of tickets. A sub-committee of the International Olympic Committee is now considering the details of this proposal, and I hope that as a result it will be possible for the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations to carry out and expand their work to the level which is essential in this year of grace, 1957.