

Extracted from the archives of de Coubertin

We found a letter dated May 2nd, 1911, addressed to Baron de Coubertin from Lorient (France) and penned by G. Hébert. It is a reply to a letter written by de Coubertin of which we do not know the contents as all the letters were written by hand and alas we have no copies. This Mr. Hébert seemed to have been a physical training teacher before he went in the Navy. Herewith is an extract of his letter to de Coubertin amongst so many others received by the *Renovator*:

‘Allow me to give you my candid opinion with regard to the Olympic Games, it seems to me that you delude yourself greatly as far as the importance of these Games is concerned. In their actual form today, the Olympic Games have only one point in common with the original Olympiads: the name, and you know this as well as I do. As a point of fact, these Games nowadays are exclusively a simple exhibition of the performances of international athletes. Their influence is non-existent in exercising any influence on physical education in the family, at school or in the army. For this reason I fully understand why Demeny(?) fails to be struck by the setting up of this form of performances. No doubt they are praiseworthy but they fail to have the deep significance you choose to give to them.’

The Renovator received hundreds of letters of this kind and reflecting similar opinions, yet he never wavered or lost his faith. On the contrary, they acted as a stimulant, an encouragement and, in the last analysis, he was able to prove that his conception was the right one. He succeeded in setting up a wonderful work in which nobody believed but himself, and which reached today an apotheosis... which cannot be surpassed. Baron de Coubertin would have been 100 years old on the 1st of January 1963. His widow will celebrate her 101 birthday on the 21st of December of this year. We are glad to state that she is in good health.