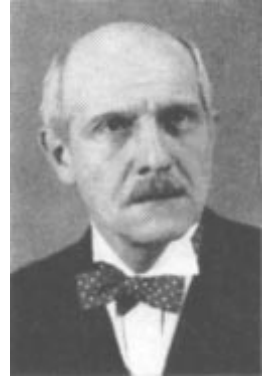


† François Piétri

(1882-1966)



Both the French Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee are in mourning. The sudden death — on Thursday, August 18th, at Sartene, in Corsica — of François Piétri profoundly affected us all — and especially myself.

Honorary General Inspector of Finances, Member of Parliament for Corsica, former minister in many government departments, French Ambassador, classical scholar, gifted speaker, historian, erudite sportsman — and an eclectic and distinguished athlete himself — former President of the French Fencing Federation and the Union of Military Equestrian Associations, one of the senior and most respected members of the I.O.C., François Piétri was an outstanding personality.

He was the author of many historical works, in particular about the Bonaparte family. In this capacity, he was even at one time a candidate for admission to the French Academy; however he preferred not to persist although he received a very large but insufficient number of votes.

In addition he was a true Parisian, possessing a lively although sometimes caustic wit, and always in great demand in fashionable and sporting circles.

A faithful disciple of Pierre de Coubertin, he was, for me, not only a friend in every sense of the word but also a valued adviser in the most delicate situations.

Of this sudden death so painfully felt by all, both in France and abroad, it has been said that this irreparable loss “ has deprived the International Olympic Committee of one of its most perfect gentlemen ”.

How could I not subscribe wholeheartedly to this moving and very just homage paid to the memory of this great-hearted, conscientious man of action — my old friend François Piétri.

As he grew older, François Piétri, who was always so alert and so impeccable, grieved to see himself growing bent with age :

— “You see, *mon cher*, we are getting nearer to the ground.. ”

— “ I’m getting closer to it too ” I replied, “ but in another way : I’m just shrinking down towards it ! ”

— “You are a dwarf candidate ”, he answered jokingly, with an indefinable smile. To which I retorted : “Straighten up, you with the back so bent. ”

His memory will remain engraved in my heart for ever, associated with that of his incomparable wife, forming a wonderful couple who were predestined to take over the Presidential residence of the Elysée (from which their home in the rue de l’Elysee was but a few steps away)... if the war had not intervened, playing havoc with all human hopes and predictions...

He was barely two years older than I, but he liked to make out he was older than he really was — which I objected to strongly, on purely personal grounds...

How I regretted not being able to join his dear wife for the funeral in Corsica. I was ill in bed in Normandy, and Alain Danet, the general secretary of the French Olympic Committee, was fortunately able — although warned only the day before the funeral — to perform the nigh impossible feat of getting to Corsica on time and representing us at Sartene.

... I address to him here in the name of us all a very sad farewell, together with my heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. François Piétri, who was the worthiest companion for him throughout his life — and I hope from the bottom of my heart that the example he set with such fine Olympic faith, with so much courtesy and such perfect knowledge of men and affairs, may be followed by all.

Armand Massard,

Vice-President of the I.O.C.,

President of the French Olympic Committee.

On behalf of myself and members of the French Olympic Committee, I wish to express our deep gratitude to all members of the I.O.C. and the N.O.C.s who have sent us their condolences on the death of President François Piétri.

A.M.