

At the time of the meeting of the International Olympic Committee Executive Board and the National Olympic Committee representatives in Mexico, it was decided that Mr. Edward WIECZOREK should be elected as a member of the enlarged Press and Public Relations Committee. In this capacity he agreed to write some articles for the Newsletter about the problems with which the National Olympic Committees could be faced. Below, we reproduce in full his first contribution :

THOUGHTS ON RELATIONS BETWEEN
INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE / NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES

by Edward WIECZOREK
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of the National Olympic Committees

The number of meetings attended by the National Olympic Committees during the XIXth Olympiad was truly impressive and, consequently, often severely criticized. In fact, the General Meeting of the National Olympic Committees lasted two days, the International Olympic Committee/National Olympic Committee meetings four days, the old Joint Commission meetings two days and the meetings of the new Joint Commissions three days; in addition there were several regional meetings of the National Olympic Committees, not to mention the meetings of the International Olympic Committee and its Executive Board.

The reason we criticized this very full programme of Olympic meetings is that during the whole period preceding the Games and to a certain extent even while they were taking place, we were often limited in our contacts with our athletes who, during the Games, are and must be our main concern.

We must therefore find a solution to this problem in the future and it should be laid down as a general principle that during the Games Olympic committee meetings should be limited to a strict minimum.

On the other hand, however, we were particularly pleased with the results of all these meetings especially with regard to future relations between the International Olympic Committee and the National Olympic Committees. It would appear in fact that, after many years of waiting, we finally reached a decisive turning point in Mexico and now everything seems to suggest that we are approaching a mutual agreement and understanding which we, the National Olympic Committees, have long wished to see reigning in the field of relations between the International Olympic Committee and the National Olympic Committees.

Keeping pace with the extremely dynamic growth of the Olympic movement throughout the world, especially during the last twenty years, the National Olympic Committees acting on behalf of the International Olympic Committee on the five continents of our planet now number 128. But, while it is true that this spectacular evolution has made the Olympic movement one of the most important moral and social forces in the world today, it is at the same time obvious that this evolution has had deep repercussions on the Olympic movement as a whole and, first of all on its forms of organization and operation. This moreover is only to be expected; it is an inevitable consequence of progress, which has not only carried the Olympic ideal across all frontiers and all barriers and raised it above all conflicts but which has also, among other things, imposed new conditions on the international cooperation of members of this huge community.

These are, I think, the main reasons leading to the steps taken after the Games of the XVIIth Olympiad in Tokyo with regard to the re-appreciation and reorganization, on new bases of the relations between the International Olympic Committee and National Olympic Committees. Subsequently, these steps led in 1965 to the first General Meeting of the National Olympic Committees held in Rome under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee, in the presence of the President and a great many members of the International Olympic Committee and attended by over 80 National Olympic Committees from all over the world. It is in fact this first meeting of the National Olympic Committees which led them to re-examine their position and their purpose. Inspired by the wish to serve Olympism better and by their attachment to the Olympic ideal, and at the same time intending fully to assume their responsibility within the framework of Olympism, the National Olympic Committees have shown their firm intention of establishing among themselves on the one hand, and between themselves and the International Olympic Committee on the other, a closer and more effective cooperation.

This practical and complex form of cooperation, which the National Olympic Committees wanted from then on, was - according to their wish and the needs experienced - to correspond to the part the National Olympic Committees play and must play in the Olympic movement and amateur sport on national and international levels.

Right from the start however, it should be emphasized that this cooperation desired by the National Olympic Committees was always based on full recognition of the International Olympic Committee and respect for its authority, as well as on the strong determination of the National Olympic Committees to strengthen and consolidate the unity of the Olympic movement.

As for the aims of this cooperation of the National Olympic Committees on the international level, two obvious realities helped to define them. First, they seemed justified by what appears to us an extremely important fact: today the activities and responsibilities of the National Olympic Committees in their respective countries have very definitely and clearly extended beyond the hitherto comparatively restricted framework of participation in the Olympic Games alone. We think in fact that today the National Olympic Committees are quite rightly being called on to cope with problems of a specific nature and type which may sometimes even lie outside the scope of the traditional concerns of the International Olympic Committee, such as for example: the exchange of experiences concerning the best structures to be adopted, technical and sports aid, the difficult problem of relations between the State and voluntary sports organizations, the great and particularly pertinent problem of the training of leaders (managers, trainers), the development of sports medicine, etc. We have therefore, in this way, listed a whole collection of very important problems within the framework of which a bilateral, multilateral and even regional cooperation on the part of the National Olympic Committees has already taken place but which, we are convinced, today more than ever demands the introduction of an efficient system of cooperation on the world scale.

Then again, we have mentioned a second large group of problems to the solution of which the National Olympic Committees would like to make an essential contribution, through a strict and close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee. We are thinking here of the many problems raised today by the growth of the Olympic movement and amateur sport, and which have direct or indirect repercussions on the activities and work of the National Olympic Committees. Among other things, we refer to the problem of the increasingly

gigantic scale of the Games, to the dangerous problem of the commercialization of sport, or the whole collection of moral and educational aspects of sport such as: amateurism, fair play and sporting ethics, doping, social assistance for athletes, etc., all of which are closely related to our main concerns and for all of which we should like to see rapid and effective solutions.

This was the context of ideas and schemes in which the National Olympic Committees worked and cooperated for three years to reach, in Mexico, the decision to create a Permanent General Assembly of National Olympic Committees, a decision which is considered decisive in the National Olympic Committees' wish to serve the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic ideal ever better.

At the same time we know that these active forms of cooperation on the part of the National Olympic Committees have, for some time now, resulted in a certain reserve and mistrust within the International Olympic Committee, and that the President and the Executive Committee of the International Olympic Committee were particularly concerned about it. In this connection and quite apart from what certain rabid opponents of progress in the Olympic movement may maintain, it should be remembered that the National Olympic Committees have always been very careful in the execution of their ideas, the sole aim of which is to find rapid, practical and effective solutions to the many problems facing them, while maintaining and preserving the ultimate and intangible aim to encourage the development of the Olympic movement under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee.

Furthermore we feel that in the three years of their combined efforts the National Olympic Committees have given sufficient proof of the real purpose and value of their work through the series of projects and plans submitted to the International Olympic Committee, which has studied them carefully and with the greatest of interest in all cases, as for example recently in Mexico. We are extremely grateful to the International Olympic Committee for this and we hope very much that concrete decisions will rapidly be made, among other things on the basis of the projects and proposals made by the National Olympic Committees.

The National Olympic Committees think that they have at last shown that the International Olympic Committee may trust them and that is why, during all the meetings of the National

Olympic Committees with the International Olympic Committee in Mexico, they expressed the wish, and emphasized how necessary it was, that the cooperation which has just been established between the National Olympic Committees in the form of a Permanent General Assembly of the National Olympic Committees, should meet with the good will, support and patronage of the International Olympic Committee, so that the National Olympic Committees might, through this system of cooperation, better serve the interests of the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic movement within the framework of the duties incumbent upon them and with all the ability and enthusiasm that the heads of the National Olympic Committees willingly place in the service of the noble cause of the Olympic ideal.

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