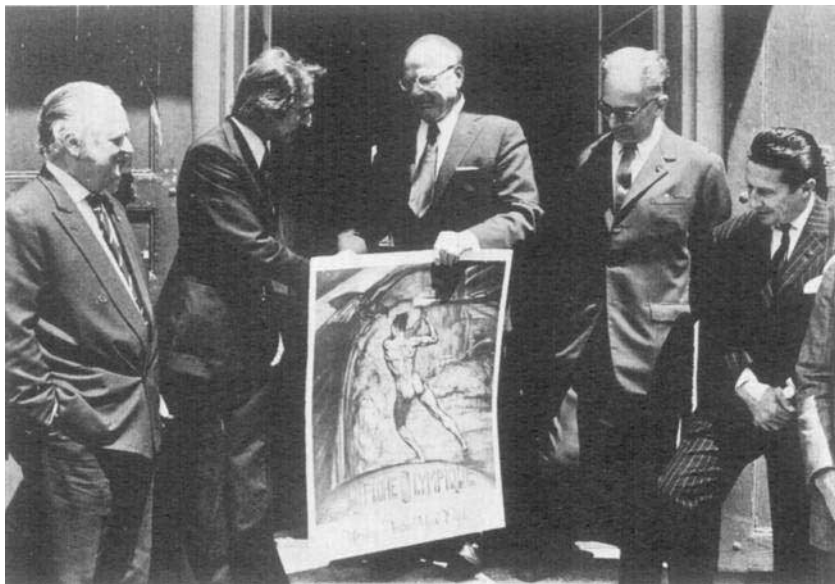


# Olympic diploma



From left to right: Lord KILLANIN, Mr. VARELA, President BRUNDAGE, Mr. MEYER, and Count de BEAUMONT.

At its 72nd Session in Sapporo, the International Olympic Committee awarded the Olympic Diploma to two sports journalists: Mr. Gaston MEYER (France) for the year 1971 and Mr. Andres Mercé VARELA (Spain) for 1972.

During a ceremony, which took place on 27th May, 1972 at Château de Vidy, attended by the Presidents and Secretary Generals of the

International Federations, the press, and many members of the International Olympic Committee, President BRUNDAGE officially presented their diplomas, urging them to better acquaint the general public with the virtues of sport and the ideal of the Olympic Movement.

We are publishing below the main points of the speeches given by the recipients.

How can one not feel especially honoured by the award of a distinction whose honours list is as eloquent as that of the Olympic Diploma, inaugurated by President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1905, I believe, the very year of my birth.

This awarding, I admit, has at once gratified and surprised me. Gratified, you, of course, understand; surprised, because I have not always been kind toward your honourable assembly, whose deep meaning and the idea of strength it represents, I nevertheless discovered a quarter of a century ago, thanks to the former chancellor, Mr. Otto MAYER, who first understood the importance of information.

Since then, I have tried to explain to my readers its deep resonance and importance, often unduly questioned. I would like to continue, of course, but you are undoubtedly convinced that the future action of the I.O.C. must be carried out on at least three levels:

1. The fight against commercialism. I say commercialism because it is independent of compensation.

2. The fight against the deadly gigantism and inflation of the program. The time has perhaps come to think about a decentralised and continental organisation, thus opening the Games to more sports and athletes, but limiting, in a reasonable way, the number of participants in the final phase.

3. Progressive studies and reforms leading to the recognition of the I.O.C. as a world sport governor. This would involve the collaboration and approval of other organisations: National Olympic Committees, International Federations, even UNESCO, why not.

These are the ideas I want, from now on, to defend, develop, and justify. The awarding of the Olympic Diploma is a small, a discreet entry in the great Olympic Family; it makes it my duty to continue with my voice and my pen. I thank you heartily for having given me the opportunities and the justification for it.

G.M.

To be in Lausanne in spring has always been one of the most difficult pleasures to explain. The majesty of the lake, the noble greatness of the Alps, everything contributes to this feeling of balance and peace. I am sure that this was not foreign to Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN when he chose Lausanne for the headquarters of the I.O.C.

But I could not imagine that this love of the Olympic City could grow still more. But now, the very fact of my being the recipient of such an unexpected award as the Olympic Diploma kindly bestowed upon me by the I.O.C. makes this feeling all the more intense.

I don't know what merits the I.O.C. discovered in me when deciding to give me this high distinction, perhaps my attachment to the Olympic idea, my love of free effort, and my devotion to the ideals of peace, fraternity, and the promotion of man, which Olympism is aimed at strengthening.

I am lucky enough to practice a marvellous profession, that being journalism and, more particularly, sports journalism. You cannot ima-

gine my emotion and pleasure when I follow, from the press stand, a sports competition, when I feel the effort of the athlete and when I transmit the happiness of a free victory, only aimed at the surpassing of man by his own means.

In my profession, I have always confirmed, by my presence at ten Olympiads and twenty five I.O.C. Sessions, the magnificent example, the constant lesson from this Don Quixote of the XXth Century, President Avery BRUNDAGE, who, with the meticulousness of an engineer, the sensitivity of an artist, and the perseverance of a champion, has become one of the highest personalities of the social and sports world in our century. I wish to thank him very sincerely for the attention he has given to my profession as a journalist and to my dedication to Olympism.

A. M. V.

