

Opening

**by Count Jean de Beaumont,
vice-president of the IOC and president of the European NOCs**

My dear colleagues,

You may have read, a little while ago, a letter that I addressed to our Secretary General, Mr. Weyman, for the attention of the European National Olympic Committees. Its purpose was to make them know the main lines of the questions which were to come up before us at the time of our meeting in Monte Carlo.

Without going into the history of the Olympic Games, I would like to emphasize the fact that to-day we have to face nearly the same difficulties that the Olympic Games have suffered in the ancient days just before their coming to an end.

You are well aware of these dangers: they are gigantism, professionalism, and national over-bidings. Athletes were paid in 195 A. D. Slaves who had won chariot races were liberated. Cities used to take in charge the material needs of the athlete who had triumphed at Olympia, and this for the rest of his life.

To-day, for the first time, one can say that it is no more the Europe of the Six, nor the Europe of the Nine, but really the Europe of the Thirty which meets, thus demonstrating to-day its vitality in respect with our ideas.

You know, as I do, that the cradle of the Olympic Games was at first in Greece, then in France with Pierre de Coubertin, the creator of the Games. These two movements being born in Europe, that is the main reason why it is up to us to assume and bear in mind our responsibilities. We must find objectives that ought to unite us and make us active and disciplined associates in the life of the Interna-

tional Olympic Committee whose activity is incessantly growing.

As you may remember, it was at Versailles for the first time in 1968 that the National European Committees held their meeting on the invitation of the French Olympic Committee. At the time we were uncertain of what we were doing. We were searching our way, while in different parts of the world other groups, more or less homogeneous, already were in existence: Pan-american Association (ODEPA), South American Group, Northern States Group, the High Council of African Sport, the Pacific Games.

To-day we are entitled to raise the question: what must we do, and how shall we do it?

Some of us have thought that in the margin of our agenda of the day, it may be useful to communicate to each of you a questionnaire on which you could individually answer by yes or no to the questions that will be put to you; this might help us to look for and find constructive solutions. Thus at the Congress of Varna, we should have a common action.

Other members have thought, that after discussing each question on the agenda it would be necessary to draw up and summarize a motion for the whole of our ideas to come eventually to a conclusion. There is no doubt that we represent a current of ideas, that we ought to make known with calm and serenity in the course of our debates, thinking only of the general interest of our Movement.

My dear colleagues, I have finished my speech, but before I take my seat again and before starting to work together, I want to thank our hosts for their hospitality, and for the friendly atmosphere surrounding us.

I am sure that all your interventions will be constructive, your speeches brief, as I have wanted mine to be. I think we will have many fruitful hours at work to prove that Europe can live to the time and the future of the Olympic Movement.

J. d. B.