

Speech of Lord Killanin

President of the International Olympic Committee

*Mr. President of the Confederation,
Mr. President of the Swiss National Olympic Committee,
Your Excellencies,
colleagues and friends,*

The joy that we expect at this session of the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne has unfortunately a cloud over it, due to the death of our President of Honour, Avery Brundage. Nearly all of you in this room, both from the Olympic world and from Switzerland, knew Mr. Brundage, who occupied the presidential chair in this city for 20 years. The spirit of the Olympic movement which had been created by Baron de Coubertin, who is buried here, was given a new life when President Brundage was elected in 1952. His name, I believe, will be linked in Olympic history with that of the founder. Many tributes have been paid to the late Mr. Brundage, whom I first met the year of his election as President.

In the year 1972, I worked closely with him, both on the Executive Board and eventually as a Vice-President. His great sense of dedication to the Olympic movement is a hard one to maintain in a very materialistic age. He was the idealist who saw the great spread in the Olympic movement after the Second World War when many countries, who had hitherto kept away from the Olympic movement, joined it while other countries, obtaining their independence, immediately formed National Olympic Committees. At the same time, the Olympic programme increased to 21 sports. He never wavered from his deep conviction that the Olympic movement could be the greatest social force in the world. He continually endeavoured to keep sports above political intrigues. He was the greatest disciple in a materialistic world for the promotion of amateur sport, free from personal and financial gain or commercial benefit. These principles must continue, but it is natural that some of the methods of implementation may and must change in an evolving world.

We all have our personal recollections of the President. Perhaps by his idealism he may have appeared at times aloof, and out of touch, but I can assure you that beneath the tough veneer was a human man, who both in his athletic prowess and intellectual attainments, especially in regard to art, was a great example to all. May I ask you to stand for a moment in respect of the President, Avery Brundage.

As President Gafner has told you, the connection between the International Olympic Committee and the City of Lausanne and the Swiss Confederation goes back 60 years, indeed just over my own life-time. I recall my first visit to Lausanne as President of a National Olympic Committee. I arrived at the station and walked up the hill to meet the Chancellor, the late Mr. Otto Mayer. I found him seated in the back office of a jewellery shop and it was from here that the International Olympic Committee was directed from an administrative point of view. I believe there was one paid professional secretary and at least two or three people working for the jewellery shop as well. This, plus the facilities provided by the City of Lausanne at the Villa Mon Repos, was the core of the Olympic movement. It is strange perhaps that my visit was possibly of a political nature as we had difficulties with the International Olympic Committee over the nomenclature of my own country.

Switzerland has played an important part in the Olympic movement. As stated by President Gafner, Baron de Coubertin chose Lausanne as its headquarters. At the start of 1915, Baron de Coubertin arranged for Baron de Blonay (Swiss) to preside ad interim when he decided to enlist in the French Army for the First World War.

Since 1896, Switzerland has taken part in each Olympic Games except at Melbourne in 1956, and naturally of course in all the Winter Games, and Lausanne has been a candidate for the Olympic Games in 1940, 1944, 1952 and 1960, as is recorded by the Olympic stadium. Lausanne was the seat of the 1913 and 1921 Congresses and of four Sessions. The 25th, 50th (in June 1944!) and 60th anniversary celebrations of the re-establishment of the Olympic Games were also held here, and there are many names, which over the years have been closely associated with the Olympic movement: the famous General Guisan, a firm supporter of Olympism who joined the ranks of the IOC from 1937 to 1939 and is well remembered, and the late Dr. Messerli, who died recently, a friend of Baron de Coubertin and official historiographer of the IOC, are but two examples. We have had a Chancellor from 1946 to 1964 who was Mr. Otto Mayer, whilst his brother, Major Albert Mayer, contributed immensely towards the Olympic movement and Swiss membership of the IOC from 1946 to 1968. I believe in the room today are both Mmes Otto and Albert Mayer, and Mme Zanchi who was one of the original people I met in the early days of my membership of the IOC.

In addition to being the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee, Switzerland is also the seat of many International Federations and the home of the spokesman for the International Federations, Mr. Thomas Keller, President of the International Rowing Federation (besides of course that of our colleague Mr. Hodler, President of the Skiing Federation). Also perhaps pertinent is that archery, so closely associated with Swiss history through William Tell, is holding its world championships at Interlaken this year, while last year Lucerne was the site of the World Rowing Championships. Here in Lausanne there is no need for me to stress the interest in all international sporting ventures by our Swiss friends and hosts. The world judo championships last year and the first junior world cycling championships this year in Lausanne are valid examples, and there are many others. It is now almost three years since the then Syndic, Mr. Chevallaz, now Minister of State for Finance, handed over the token key from President Brundage to myself. Since then, I have had my office in the Château de Vidy, supported by a most loyal staff and with the maximum cooperation of the Syndic, Mr. Delamuraz, who is here, and who succeeded Mr. Chevallaz.

Through pressure of time rather than lack of intention, the whole question of an Olympic museum in Lausanne has perhaps not progressed at the rate it might have done. It would appear to me that where our headquarters are situated, it is equally important—not only to have the archives and library as close to hand to the administration as possible—but also the accumulation of articles of interest which should be exhibited in the most modern and up to date way in this city. I hope during the coming years this will be accomplished but, like everything, it requires time and money.

I would, Mr. President of the Confederation, like to thank you as a Lausannois for the close help and interest in our movement.

I mentioned that my first visit to Lausanne was really of a political-sporting nature and once again we find on our agenda many items which arise from political situations. In an ever-evolving and changing social world, when countries are obtaining their independence and sport and the Olympic movement have become of world-wide interest—due to the initiative of Baron Pierre de Coubertin—this is perhaps inevitable but frequently regrettable.

The International Olympic Committee is now the catalyst of a very large and important movement; not only are we directly associated with over 130 National Olympic Committees and 26 International Federations, whose sports are included in the Olympic Games, but we also have many others who would like to be included on the programme. At the same time, we are having the closest cooperation with those bodies, whether they are governmental, semi-governmental or private, which have the same ideals as ourselves.

I think we must continually sound a note of warning. I have repeatedly said that the Olympic movement is not only the allocation and ruling of the Olympic Games. It is something throughout the world, which exists for 24 hours a day for every day of the year. It is something that can be of good to all. We meet to try to over-ride all our differences, whatever our views, with the common interest and denominator of sport and recreation.

At times I believe the athletes and potential athletes may become the victims of administrative ambitions. It is the task of the Olympic movement, especially administrators and

officials, to give the highest priority to the athletes. This applies equally to the International Olympic Committee, the International Federations and the National Olympic Committees, whose executives must direct all their energies towards the improvement of all the Olympic movement and not for their personal ambitions or promotions.

We must be selfless and not selfish. The Olympic Games are for competitors and athletes. Because of ever-increasing standards, because of ever-increasing technical progress, whether it is by the manufacturer, the scientist or the doctor, our motto "Citius, Altius, Fortius" can possibly lead us astray. The Olympic Games are not about breaking records; the Olympic Games are about winning. They are not only about winning but about competing. At this moment, people are thinking of the next Games and as you know during the past few days the Montreal Organising Committee has encountered new problems over which it has no control, nor indeed has the IOC. We shall be receiving reports this week and we all hope these problems will be resolved. The Games cannot be postponed until 1977 and the IOC is firm that the competitors must have Olympic opportunities in 1976.

I have just come from Rome, and as I had to write this speech before the results of the Rome meeting for reasons of translation, it is not possible for me to include any remarks on that meeting except to say I feel very strongly that there must be the closest cooperation between the National Olympic Committees and the IOC, as ably expressed by President Gafner. At the same time I must recall that all National Olympic Committees are formed by representatives of the various sports recognised by the International Federations, which is why that trinity must work very closely together. At the end of the session, we shall be having a meeting of the Tripartite Commission, consisting of representatives of the IOC, the International Federations and the National Olympic Committees. This is not intended to be a suprabody but a coordinating one, so that the common interests can be coordinated to the benefit of the IOC, the IFs and the NOCs. During this session we will have the report from the Rome meeting and will endeavour to deal with it as far as possible. Unfortunately, this meeting with the NOCs should have taken place earlier in the year on the continent of Africa, but this was not possible and therefore there is a time problem in that the members of the IOC will not have the full documentation of the Rome meeting, but only verbal reports.

We shall have our problems which we must resolve. We must keep all doors open and endeavour to set the finest and highest example. If we do not do this, the Olympic movement and all concerned with it will fail in their duty. There are some cynical people who believe that perhaps the world would be better without sport as it leads to more troubles than solutions. I do not believe this, but I do believe that all of us, the IOC, the IFs, and the NOCs, have a grave responsibility. When I walked up the hill to Mr. Mayer's shop as President of a National Olympic Committee, little did I think that less than 25 years later, I would be presiding at a session of the IOC in Lausanne.

I thank everybody for their loyal support and also their constructive criticism. I would not have a clear conscience if there was no criticism, but one only asks that it should be constructive and expressed openly. Mr. President of the Confederation, thank you very much for honouring us, as the first citizen of this country, by being with us here today, and thank you all for your continued support.

