

On completing the fourth year of his term of office, Lord Killanin, President of the International Olympic Committee, sent a circular letter to the IOC members in which he broaches and gives his opinion on some of the problems the IOC is currently having to face.

A copy of this letter was also sent to the International Federations, Organising Committees for the next Olympic Games and Winter Games, members of the Commission for Olympic Solidarity and the Tripartite Commission, as well as to the press.

Dated 23rd December 1976, the letter deals first and foremost with the crucial problem of political incidents in the field of sport which have been increasing for some time:

«Considerable concern must be shown at the political effects on not only the Olympic Games and movement but international sport generally. It is realistic to state that from the earliest days of the revival of the Olympic movement and Games there has never been an Olympiad without political problems. There is however a difference between political problems which may affect the Olympic movement and the use of the Games or sport for political or other purposes.

It must be recalled that it is not necessary for any country or territory to join the Olympic movement or any International Federation, but having agreed to join, the rules must be obeyed. In Montreal there were threats from two National Olympic Committees to withdraw from the Games. The government of the country of the organising city selected by the National Olympic Committee did not abide by the terms on which the Games were attributed to that city. A number of nations withdrew mainly upon the request of their governments because of the participation of a team from a National Olympic Committee whose countrymen had competed in a non-Olympic sport in South Africa, whose recognition has been withdrawn by the IOC.

Besides affecting the Olympic movement generally, these last minute withdrawals react first of all on the athletes and competitors who have prepared for the competitions. Several of the International Federations found themselves at the last moment either missing individual competitors in preliminary rounds or whole teams in competitions where there had been eliminations, and it was too late to replace missing teams. This affected the organisation of the Games and the spectators seriously. It was the view of the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee and the International Federations that last minute withdrawal for reasons other than sickness or unforeseen circumstances should not be tolerated and must be the subject of strict sanctions in the future. The matter will be discussed when the Executive Board meets with the National Olympic Committees, who must be assisted in their independence, in Abidjan at the end of March next. The Executive Board will then be making recommendations to the IOC Session in Prague.

There is a welcome increasing interest by governmental and official organisations in sport in various countries which has been inspired by the IOC and the Olympic movement. At

the same time there is a danger of increasing government political interference. It must be remembered that under IOC Rule 24 (c) National Olympic Committees must not associate themselves with affairs of a political nature and under Rule 25 they must be completely independent and autonomous and oppose all political, religious and commercial pressures. At the Montreal Session, an addition was made to Rule 25 by which National Olympic Committees and individuals who did not conform to the rules and regulations of the IOC may either be suspended or have their recognition withdrawn. Upon the request of the Executive Board this rule has been amended by the Juridical Commission and approved in Montreal. Further amendments are being made.

Olympic Games 1980

I visited Moscow from 17th/21st November. The guarantees from Moscow and Lake Placid are referred to and reiterated in the minutes of the Barcelona meetings. I wish to state that on November 19th, together with President Ignati Novikov of the Organising Committee, President Sergei Pavlov of the USSR National Olympic Committee, and Mr. Vitaly Smirnov, member of the Executive Board of the IOC and Vice-President of both the Moscow Organising Committee and the USSR National Olympic Committee, I saw Mr. Nikolai Podgorny, President of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet, who reaffirmed that the Soviet Government would abide by the agreement made at the time of the awarding of the Games, i.e. all recognised personnel, authorised or accredited competitors, officials, press, besides the five recognised international news agencies, will be permitted to enter and compete at Moscow. With President Podgorny's agreement I made this clear at the press conference which followed the next day. In regard to spectators, at no time has the IOC insisted on the free admission to any country of unlimited numbers of spectators or indeed ever stated the number of spectators who should attend.

The stipulations at the stadia only refer to the number of seats for the various categories of persons. The allocation of seats will be done through the National Olympic Committees in the normal way in conjunction with available accommodation and seating. There are at present 38,000 hotel beds in Moscow to which a further 42,000 are being added. To this number there will also be added hostel facilities for some 30,000 spectators. The total seating at any one time will be a maximum of some 400,000 seats. Therefore 25% of the seats are allocated to foreign visitors. These will be allocated through the official agencies nominated by the National Olympic Committees, as is customary. Further, the Olympic village will be able to house some 12,000 athletes. This will be later converted to apartment blocks which will house about the same number of persons. The majority of rooms will hold two competitors, although there may be some cases of three persons to a room.

Accompanied by the Technical Director I visited the majority of sites and had full discussions with the Chairman of the Moscow Soviet Executive Committee, Mr. Vladimir Promyslov. Construction progress would appear to be excellent.

As you know the Lake Placid Organising Committee has reported fully in Barcelona and I plan to make a similar visit to Lake Placid as the one to Moscow, either personally or by delegating someone to inspect the progress.

The Organising Committees of Moscow and Lake Placid will be reporting to the Executive and NOCs at Abidjan and to the full meeting of the IOC Session in Prague.

Olympic Solidarity

I was able to attend the closing ceremony of the Olympic Solidarity course at Mexico City organised by the IOC Solidarity Commission together with the Pan-American Sports Organisation and the Mexican National Olympic Committee, on 30th November. This was the largest course so far held and was devoted especially to trainers and coaches. A full report of this will be issued in due course as will other activities of Olympic Solidarity. The full Olympic Solidarity Commission will be meeting at Abidjan.

Circulars and visits

Some confusion has arisen by individual members of the IOC sending out circulars to all members. Whilst naturally members are free to correspond with one another, these circulars can lead to considerable confusion and I would particularly ask that if members should wish to have anything circularised this should be done through the headquarters at Vidy to ensure correct distribution and translation.

As you know it is very much recommended that members come to Lausanne and visit the Secretariat whenever they see fit. In this respect I would like to draw your attention to the fact that you should make sure that the Directors have no special meetings and are available to see you when you arrive.

Special Session of the IOC

Only six members requested a special Session and the Executive unanimously considered in Barcelona that it is not necessary to call a Session before Prague. However, this raised the whole question of special Sessions, which, according to the present rules, must be called at the request of one third of the members, or by the President. To accomplish anything, there must be a quorum of 50% plus one of the membership. Further, it is necessary to have a minimum of 5 languages at Sessions, which is an increasing and added expense to the IOC or organisers, besides of course the personal cost to members for travel and accommodation. It is essential that if sufficient members, or the President, request a special Session this should be possible, but in view of the problems I have asked the Juridical Commission to study the rules regarding special Sessions or meetings of the IOC and a new wording in the light of the present organisation of the IOC will be proposed in Prague.

With many thanks for all your assistance and help during the last four years and especially during the time of the Olympic Games in Montreal and Innsbruck, and at the Sessions, and best wishes for 1977 and the coming years. »

