

Six Questions to the President of the IOC

Lord Killanin analyses the problems of Olympism

Following the conclusion of three days of marathon meetings, first with the IOC Executive Board and then with the Executive Board and the International Federations, Lord Killanin, disregarding his fatigue in the wake of the debates, met with us to answer our questions and at the same time, outline coolly and calmly the problems affecting the Olympic movement. Amid the calm of his Lausanne office at Vidy, where on the wall there hangs a photograph of his predecessor, Mr. Avery Brundage, Lord Killanin spoke to us in French and did not ask to see our questions in advance, an occurrence rare enough to bear mentioning.

China

Question : Mr. President, in 1975, when replying to a journalist concerning the People's Republic of China, you said : "*China's return to the Olympic Games will be welcome, but it is subject to the conditions laid down in the Olympic regulations.*" Four years later, the Chinese are still waiting at the door. Has progress been made with this problem ? Can the issue be compared to Germany and Korea ?



Lord Killanin : *It would be wrong to fry to establish a relationship between the China problem and those involving Germany and Korea, One question which requires an answer is whether the IOC made a mistake following the defeat of Chang Kai-Shek, his*

fall from power and subsequent flight to the island of Taiwan, which was a Chinese province. The reports in my possession at the Château de Vidy, IOC headquarters in Lausanne, are contradictory.

At any rate, I feel that the Chinese Olympic Committee located in Taipei made a serious error when it withdrew its athletes at Montreal. Under an agreement with the Canadian Government we had authorised this delegation to retain its anthem and flag, but had requested that its name be changed from "Republic of China" to "Taiwan". Today, the Republic of China is no longer recognised by international institutions and very few countries would allow a team bearing the name "Republic of China" to participate in a sports event.

Apartheid

Question : Do you believe there will be a reoccurrence in Lake Placid or Moscow of events similar to those which shook the Games in Montreal and resulted in the unfortunate departure of the Africans ? As you are aware, Mr. President, France is to host a tour of athletes from South Africa, which has been expelled from the Olympic movement for its policy of apartheid. Is this the beginning of a new crisis ?



Lord Killanin : *It is not the beginning of a new crisis, as we have nothing to do with rugby. Nonetheless, in the wake of the experience in Montreal, those athletes fortunate enough to travel and to participate in a competition sport at the international level*

ought to think of others as well. These rugby players bear a great responsibility. I am being kept informed of what is happening in South Africa : I am aware that major changes are taking place and that multi-racial sport is being developed, but I am also aware that apartheid is a national policy in the country, which prevents South Africa from rejoining the ranks of world sport. I have just returned from Africa where I was often asked about this tour in France by the South African rugby players. We can only hope that this event will not be used to mar the Games as was done in Montreal. During my African tour, I learned that almost none of the National Olympic Committees and the athletes involved wished to leave Montreal, any more than those who had financed the

long journey they had made. It should always be considered, before taking such a serious decision, that it is not those associated with apartheid who suffer, but, rather, the competitors, the Organising Committee, the Federations and the public.

Doping

Question : Is there a danger posed to the future of the Olympic Games by doping and all the forms it assumes?



Lord Killanin : *This problem, in my view, is the greatest danger, far more serious than infractions of the Rules concerning amateurism or any insidious political intrusion. Anabolic steroids create false individuals, be they men or women-artificial people*

out of test tubes. The very aim of sport and Olympic sports in particular, is to create healthy and well-rounded human beings.

Amateurism

Question : You have stated on several occasions, including on 11th March before the International Federations, that following the completion of the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad, you will be reexamining Rule 26 which deals with conditions of eligibility for the Olympic Games. This Rule and the bye-law accompanying it are quite broad : the Rule authorises reimbursement of expenses and payment to cover loss of wages, What direction will the changes to this much talked of Rule take?



Lord Killanin : *My feeling is that the general basis of Rule 26 is satisfactory. We must, however, take another look at it-and I have asked Mr. Daume to undertake this task-as some Federations wanting to draw up their own rules in this regard need*

guidelines. There is, nonetheless, one point which disturbs me, and that is ac-

cepting the practice of making payments to cover wage-loss for individuals who are not, in fact, professionals, but are full-time athletes. Such a situation is possible only in wealthy countries led by wealthy governments and in which sport is supervised by National Olympic Committees with considerable resources.

I have also been asked many times why I am opposed to "open" Games. I must point out here that I am not against professionalism-you are probably aware that my son is a professional jockey. "Opening" the Games, however, would be tantamount to turning them over immediately to the impresarios. One need look no further than tennis, a sport whose development is indeed cause for concern, in which the impresarios dictate terms through their intermediaries, the national federations.

Women and the IOC

Question : Since I began working at the IOC, many of my women friends have reproached me for belonging to a world organisation which encourages sexual discrimination, at least as far as its leadership is concerned. How would you reply to these attacks, Mr. President ?



Lord Killanin, with a smile : *Perhaps you would have me replace Mme Monique Berlioux, Director of the IOC, with a man ? I have seen many lovely young ladies at Vidy...*

Then, abruptly serious : It is true that the International Olympic Committee has no fe-

male members, but I can tell you that there are three women who will soon be candidates. I am certain that we shall see some women after 1980, when places will become available. It must be pointed out that in Europe and Asia there are very few women in the national federations ; in contrast, many women are involved in the United States and in Africa.

The role of governments

Question : The predominant role of Olympism in world sport generates feelings of

envy in some quarters. International organisations covet such a respected position and are seeking to establish a parallel body. What dangers would this body present for athletes throughout the world ?



Lord Killanin : *Nothing less than the death of sport would result, as governments tend to change very rapidly and such changes often involve brutal passages from one policy to another. The role of government is, essentially, to encourage the development*

of sport among young people ; financing this operation gives government the right of scrutiny, but its role ends there.

Sport is, first and foremost, the domain of the federations-or confederations when such bodies exist-the National Olympic Committees and the international Olympic Committee, all of which can collaborate with governments. To date, the IOC has engaged in continual, useful collaboration with UNESCO, whose Director General, Mr. Mahtar M'Bow, recently paid a visit to Vidy. In the same spirit, I shall be attending, from 5th to 9th June in Paris, a conference bringing together ministers of sport.

At this point, our discussion came to an end, as Lord Killanin had not finished his work prior to boarding a plane bound for Dublin. Over and above his many tasks, the President endeavours to prepare, either for the IOC Session in Montevideo or the meeting of the IOC Executive Board with the National Olympic Committees in San Juan, a report on his African journey which served to acquaint him with three greatly varied but, in the final analysis, closely related areas : the development of African sport, the creation of new National Olympic Committees on the African continent and the means by which a better structure may be established for a vital element in the Olympic movement, solidarity.

Georges Descœudres

