

Olympic Week in Lausanne

In our article presenting Olympic Week 1982 in Lausanne (No. 172-173, page 79) we announced the giving of the Olympic flag to the Municipality. Here are the speeches given by the President of the IOC, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch and by the Mayor of Lausanne, Mr. Paul-René Martin, on this occasion.

27th February 1982 Speech by the President of the IOC Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch

Monsieur Le Syndic,
Municipal Councillors,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Sixty-seven years ago, amidst the troubled hours of the First World War, the most illustrious of my predecessors and father of the modern Olympics, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, signed a treaty with Mayor Maillefer establishing Lausanne as the headquarters of the IOC.

This decision was not one of chance. If Switzerland's neutrality during this period of discord played a certain role at the time of this resolution, the appreciation Coubertin had for Lausanne and its inhabitants was no less important.

As a result of his many visits along the shores of Vaud, as he himself stated in his "Memoirs", he became acquainted with and grew to appreciate the particular character of the inhabitants of this district.

The headquarters of the IOC were at that time located in France, at the home of its President. This situation was a difficult one for Coubertin as he could see the potential danger for the Olympic movement being associated with a nation under war. It was for this reason that, after making contact with an old family friend Dr. Morax, Director of the Vaudois Sanitary Services, he organised a sports psychology congress in Lausanne in 1913, with the support of Professor Milloud from the University of Lausanne, and of the young Dr. Messerli and Mr. Motta, then President of the Confederation.

It was also without hesitation that in 1915 he alone decided to sign with Mayor Maillefer this famous treaty establishing Lausanne as the

headquarters of the IOC. At the same time he asked his colleague Baron Godefroy de Blonay, at his Chateau de Granson near Lausanne, "to relace him in his official duties" as of the 1st January 1916. Moreover a modest skeleton of the Olympic Museum was installed at the Montbenon Casino.

At the end of the War, Coubertin hastened to gather his colleagues to endorse the decision for a permanent centre for Olympism and to confirm the choice of Lausanne. The 25th Anniversary of the IOC furnished him with an appropriate occasion. Presided over by the new President of the Confederation, Mr. Gustave Ador, the celebration of this quarter of a century by the city of Lausanne in 1919, helped to convince his colleagues. In 1922 the IOC installed for the first time its offices on the third floor of the Mon Repos Villa, donated by the community. The Olympic Museum was then founded and installed in 1934 by Coubertin. He himself lived there for a time.

From 1922 to 1967, the Mon Repos Villa accommodated the Olympic movement. From the many meetings held there, the most renowned names associated with Olympism were lured, as well as an unceasing number of journalists who came to associate the name of Lausanne with the world of sports.

The city often envisaged the idea of organising the Olympic Games, never winning the bid. The most recent tentative date was in 1960. I hope that the next time will be crowned with success.

But if this honour does not fail her, Lausanne nevertheless has developed a combination of sports activities and installations where before there existed few. It is truly a city of sports.

In 1967, the Mon Repos Villa's quarters being too cramped, the municipality graciously donated the Chateau de Vidy to the IOC. Unfortunately the Museum could not accompany the move, and for the time being closed its doors.



The President of the IOC during his speech; to his left, Mr. Paul-René Martin, Mayor of Lausanne, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Nicod, the Municipal Secretary.

Thanks to the new arrangement with the city, a provisional museum and a centre for Olympic studies will open in a few months on Ruchonnet Avenue. We hope to install ourselves, in three or for years' time, in a new building that the IOC will erect in Lausanne, giving more weight to its title "Olympic City" already accorded to your town.

Mr. Mayor, with these actions, these hopes, these activities – the city of Lausanne has always assisted and supported them to the best of her ability. All of your predecessors, from Mayor Maillefer to Mayor Delamuraz, including Messrs. Rosset and Chevallaz, have understood and foreseen the attraction and advantage of establishing an organisation such as the IOC in Lausanne.

Their positive collaboration with the successive Presidents of the IOC – Pierre de Coubertin, Baillet-Latour, Sigfrid Edstrom, Avery Brundage and Lord Killanin – permits this historic day to occur. Thanks to their successful actions, and their great vision for the future, they have contributed to the Olympic movement a universally recognised strength. The action of the Swiss Confederation in decreeing the IOC a non-governmental international organisation is evident proof.

It is for all these reasons, Mr. Mayor, and all of you here, that I may today affirm that the city of Lausanne and the International Olympic Committee are united by more bonds than can

be imagined. In sixty years of effective collaboration, this union has been a positive and deepening one.

Also, I have the privilege and great honour, Mr. Mayor, to place into your hands the Olympic flag, symbol of the recognition of our organisation to the city of Lausanne. It is the true demonstration of our wish to remain within these walls.

I hope all your citizens are honoured as well, and please thank them for their support of the Olympic movement.

J. A. S.