



“SHOWING THE BEST A COUNTRY AND A REGION HAVE TO OFFER!”

Everywhere calmly and courteously ! In just a few hours, Michel Barnier takes in Paris, Lyon and Grenoble before returning to his home territory of Chambéry and Albertville. It is 8 p.m. one Friday evening at the Savoy General Council, the administrative centre for the Department. The only lights still on in the building are on the third floor, home of the very young brains trust of the man who personifies both his region and the 1992 Games. Clutching a voluminous briefcase under his arm, Michel Barnier arrives from Paris looking as full of energy as if his day was just starting...
“I’ll be with you in a few minutes.”



The delegation from Albertville during the IOC Executive Board Meeting last December : Mr. Michel Barnier (right), Mr. Armand de Rendinger (left) and Mr. Claude Villain.

— **What are the results of the first year’s work by the OCOG ?**

— The work that has been accomplished has been both important and difficult. Silent too, as until February 1988 only Calgary is allowed to use the Olympic label. It is advisable to say precise and serious things while trying not to say anything which isn’t necessary. The morning after the victory we had to create our operational tool. This was done on the planned date, 24th February, with the creation of the OCOG. This is like a kind of Olympic Games “firm”, at the heart of which a multi-discipline team was set up with

local civil servants and people from the private sector. With people from Savoy and from outside.

— **What were the main priorities for the OCOG team to tackle ?**

— The team set up its office in Albertville while waiting to do the same in Paris. It started on all the groundwork to research and work out all the technical data for the Games: geology, topography, layout for the ski runs, traffic and transports studies, etc. Under the authority of Claude Villain who was, at my request, given the financial mission, the budget for the Games was worked out. This budget estimate has served as a basis for consultation with the State.

— **This concerns the organisation of the actual Games themselves. But there are also huge problems as regards public facilities ?**

— Parallel to this, a great deal of work has been done by the Prefect of Savoy and the General Council in order to get progress made with the files on the public facilities necessary to the success of the ‘92 Games. Thanks to this work, essential decisions have been made concerning the RN 90, extending the motorway as far as Albertville, the road layout in La Maurienne, improvements to hospitals and the water and sewage systems. None of these decisions came about by chance; they are all the product of hard work at local level and good coordination with the government.

— **A year later, now that the euphoria of victory has died down, has the venture taken on a new aspect for you personally ?**

— You can't really compare the candidature period to the period when preparations for the Games are under way, except in one respect: the spirit of dialogue and willingness to establish a real partnership with private firms, local government, MPs, the government and the sporting movement.

— **Having assessed the achievements of 1987, can you say what work 1988 will have in store ?**

— It will be a year which will see the completion of the technical studies and work being started on the huge building sites. It will also see the start of a communication plan to promote the Games.

— **What do you see as being the trademark of the 1992 Games?**

— The Olympic Games are a tremendous occasion, an historic encounter between young people of the whole world, putting aside questions of race, origins and regimes. For France, it is the chance to be faithful to herself, to her traditions as an open and generous nation. Going beyond the actual occasion itself, the Games are, through the influence of the media, the chance for France and for the region to show the best they have to offer and what they are capable of on a sporting, technical and cultural level. Finally it is a rare chance to promote our language, too.

All these reasons justify the OCOG in its wish to set its sights very high as regards the quality of these 1992 Games, their spirit and their Alpine character.

Interviewed by Jean-Pierre Copin

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