



The Games must shed light over the whole Olympic Movement.

by RAYMOND GAFNER

IOC ADMINISTRATEUR DÉLÉGUÉ

The statements which I felt induced to make on my return from Calgary proved to me, if proof was needed, but this time with the evidence of current events, that within large areas of public opinion there exists profound ignorance, owing to lack of information or indifference, concerning the message which we endeavour to convey through the medium of the Olympic Games.

I indeed, remaining faithful to Pierre de Coubertin's idea, we regard these Games as one of the aspects, certainly the most spectacular, and in a way the most powerful lever, of Olympic activity taken as a whole, but not as a goal in themselves. But it is, alas, all too often this latter picture which public opinion, fuelled by the media, regards as the only real one, or even the only one which exists.

Instead of being surprised and upset at this, I believe it would be more useful to examine our own attitude, so as to determine whether we have honestly done everything in our power to avoid the Games supplanting, eclipsing or overshadowing all the other aspects of Olympic life. We would then realize that, albeit with the best intentions, we have gradually let the idea gain ground that, apart from the games, the Olympic Movement was little more than a title. For a long time now, the reality has been quite different.

This misunderstanding which still persists is at the root of the mistaken idea which so many of our contemporaries have regarding the relationship between Olympism and money, a subject which I touch upon briefly in my "Hello from Vidy" this month.

Obviously, I am not unaware of all the positive things that have already been done to affirm our presence, whether at IOC level or by the NOCs, the IFs, the International Olympic Academy, the National Academies, Olympic Solidarity, Olympic Museums, or the Olympic Congresses in Varna and Baden-Baden, to mention but a few.

But we must recognize that the harvest has been too poor, perhaps because the seed was sown in soil difficult to cultivate, ground over which the Games have thrown their gigantic shadow rather than allowing the crop to bathe in the radiance emanating from them.

I use this metaphor deliberately, for it seems to me to contain the answer for the future. For Olympism to become a coherent whole, together we need to show realism, but even more so imagination, using the most varied means, but without adversely affecting its dignity, to "sell" our message more successfully to the world of today and tomorrow.

It is not my intention to enumerate these means here ; to my mind they should in the very near future be the subject of a wide-ranging census in which I invite our readers to take part. But

I see the main action — as the title of this article indicates, moreover — as being within the framework of the Olympic Games, the influence of which is enormously broadened by the action of the media. Our objective in this area must be to succeed in transforming this action by the media into collaboration ; in getting the media to include in their presentation an attractive image of Olympism. I am thinking, for example, of the impact which could be achieved by the incorporation into television broadcasts of the rich artistic programme of such excellent quality presented by the OCOGs of Calgary and, soon, of Seoul, or of the art competitions which are likely to be reintroduced in a new form, or of certain video cassettes from Olympic Solidarity and the Olympic Museum. The written press and radio, which still reach the largest number of people in many countries, could take part in this venture using those means (interviews, reports, investigative articles) at which they excel.

In this way we could make full use of the topical interest aroused during the privileged period of the Olympic Games to highlight the nature and quality of the services which the Olympic Movement provides continuously to the world at large.

Armed with the experiences gained in Calgary in this sphere, and which we shall be renewing in Seoul with particular care, we should, in order to reach our goals, starting this autumn, move into top gear with the help of all our communication experts, both within the IOC and outside. Albertville and Barcelona seem to me to be ideally placed, benefiting from the prestigious group of people involved, to give life and depth to this grand and necessary project, of which I have but sketched the outlines here.

R. G.

