

CLOSING SPEECH OF MR GERHARD HEIBERG, LOOC PRESIDENT

Sixteen days have passed since the Opening Ceremony. Now, the question is, did we achieve what we set out to do: to give the world the Olympic Games the Norwegian way, Games with a human touch, in a friendly atmosphere, with strong emphasis on the environmental aspect. Together with the IOC, we also planned to show the world that it is possible to work together and compete in harmony and in peaceful surroundings. This is a time in life when such coexistence is absolutely essential. The athletes have given us their answer through their excellent results with drama, excitement and only fair play. You have with your performances, attracted a large number of spectators, and the spectators have given you a lot of inspiration in your efforts to achieve better results. To my fellow countrymen who have been in this area during the Games, I would not have been possible without the support of the 30,000 volunteers and regular staff. You can really be proud of yourselves, always willing to help, service-minded and smiling. You are excellent ambassadors for Norway and the Olympic movement. Representatives of the media have in an excellent way brought these Games to all parts of the world. As far as we understand, the millions and millions who have followed us through the mass media have been pleased with what they have seen and heard. As the president of the Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee, I am deeply honoured and touched at this moment. On behalf of the organization, I would like to thank the IOC for having placed such great confidence in us, the mass media for the way they have presented the Games to the world, the public for their enthusiasm, the athletes for their performances and the staff for their strong support and help.

this sixteenth day they were probably exhausted, but nevertheless overjoyed that they had shown such a perfect and fitting response. Norway is truly the country of the Winter Games; because of its snow, its candid passion for winter sports, and its sports talent. With twenty-six medals, including ten golds, their record gave many people something to think about. President Juan Antonio Samaranch was unstinting in his praise when, in the great white arena, the hour for compliments and thanks had arrived: "The best Olympic Winter Games ever," he said. The words were not new, but they were very welcome, being proclaimed before so many witnesses. In the opinion of Gerhard Heiberg, the president of LOOC, the Games had achieved their

aims (see left). Lillehammer was determined to share this hard-won experience. The city of the next Winter Games in 1998, Nagano, will of course be the first to benefit. The relay will be handed over in the form of an expedition to the limits of human endurance, over the Arctic wastes of Siberia to Japan. In the arena the dogs were growing impatient, the sleds were ready to depart, and night was bringing polar temperatures with it. In a year Nagano will receive the ecological message and Norway's encouragement to follow the example it has just set. Then came the Olympic flag. Standing either side of President Samaranch, the two mayors, Audun Tron and Tasuku Tsukada exchanged the solemn symbol. The athletes had already performed their lap of honour.

