

ADDRESS BY MR. E. PETRALIAS

President of the International Olympic Academy

AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 12th SESSION

The proceedings of the 12th Session of the International Olympic Academy have come to a happy end with God's help.

I can truthfully say that many were the factors which now make it possible for me to declare, from this rostrum, that the 12th Session of the I.O.A. was one of the most fruitful and successful. The stay here was pleasant, the board quite satisfactory, the eagerness to participate in meetings and discussions most laudable, the contribution of new ideas and discussion very fruitful, the cooperation of everybody truly fraternal, understanding indeed moving and overall results of a very high level. I would like to congratulate all and everyone of you and express my deepest appreciation and gratitude because in our work here during these past two weeks you have proved yourselves to be worthy representatives of your countries and honest followers of the principles of the Olympic movement.

Our programme although very rich, was at the same time more comfortable than those of the previous years. Perhaps we have succeeded in finding the golden mean, that is subjects which arise the interest and even enthusiasm, without being too long and tiring, a fact which destroys interest and may even lead to boredom which can be unpleasant.

New lecturers assisted the veteran speakers who have already proved their skill in dealing with subjects related to the philosophy of the Olympic Movement, the history of the ancient Games and the history of Olympia and Elis and spoke on the always contemporary question of the Olympic Games and art, the education of young athletes, the athletes' environment from the medical point of view, sports law and regulations, audiovisual media, the importance of bibliography and documentation, etc.

The main theme of this session was «the environment - social, school, Olympic, etc. - of the Olympic athlete, and we also had the opportunity to discuss many other subjects in live language groups (English group A and B, French, German, Greek and Arab).

Our very constructive conclusions will be submitted, as is the custom in the I.O.A. to the International Olympic Committee, which is the only competent body to take decisions.

I would like to express to all of you my deepest thanks. I thank the

participants for their eager and fruitful participation and the lecturers for their major contribution to the success of our work.

The I.O.A., from Session to Session, is making constant progress and I am proud to say that from year to year the participants' stay here is improving and that our objectives are being fulfilled in the best possible way and this is due to the dedication of all those who stand on our side, our Greek and foreign co-workers, and contribute their time and efforts to the achievement of the I.O.A.'s task.

The Hellenic Olympic Committee is aware of the fact that it is the duty of Greece to keep the torch of Olympism high and burning, this torch which was lit, 76 years ago, under the blessed inspiration of the French nobleman, Pierre de Coubertin, by idealists and humanists. And the International Olympic Academy, operating in Ancient Olympia, the source and cradle of the Olympic Idea, has now become the Cultural Centre of world sports, from which the moral principles of the Olympic movement must spring. We will do our duty integrally in order to fulfill the aims of the I.O.A. And you, my dear young friends, I believe you have realized this during the fortnight you spent here. And if you have indeed seen this, I will ask you, when you return to your country, to proclaim that we will always be ready to welcome with open arms the youth of the world, that our invitation is addressed to all the people and that we fervently wish to achieve international cooperation for the glory of Olympism and world peace.

