

de la presse ne lui constituent plus un adjuvant nécessaire pour vivre et prospérer. Nous savons que certains en jugent autrement et s'exclament sur la décadence commençante du lawn-tennis auquel ils cherchent déjà un remplaçant. Qui vivra verra. Du reste cette même antienne a déjà été dite il y a une dizaine d'années. Les prophètes notaient le fléchissement du jeu et parlaient de sa disparition prochaine. Cette apparente désaffection fut suivie d'un essor universel. Il faut toujours faire la part de la mode et du snobisme. Mais, cet appoint là mis à part, nous croyons que — comme le foot-ball et plus que lui — le lawn-tennis a poussé dans le sol contemporain des racines extrêmement solides.



THE POSSIBLE UNIFICATION OF THE AMATEUR DEFINITION

The movement towards unification of the amateur definition has made much progress since the inquiry instituted by the "Sporting Life" a couple of years ago brought the subject within the bounds of practical politics. Earlier attempts to obtain data upon which a solution of this most difficult problem might be based had proved unsuccessful, but the remarkable dossier of evidence collected by that journal comprised expressions of opinion from representatives of sport all over the world, and when the International Olympic Committee took the matter in hand, they had before them a collection of opinions which could not but prove of the utmost value in enabling them to arrive at a conclusion on the subject. The exhaustive report prepared by Count de Bertier de Sauvigny, and submitted to the International Olympic Council in 1909, concluded with the suggestion that the Federations, Associations, & Societies principally interested should be called upon for their views on the subject, and five questions were submitted to them. Their replies as given in the "Revue Olympique" form a further valuable contribution towards a settlement of the question, and while the progress towards a solution of the differences therein exposed must of

necessity be somewhat slow, it need not be any the less sure. There is this to be said, that the varying shades of opinion upon the questions of expenses, of reinstatements, and disqualifications do not destroy the general hue of the principle that an amateur is the athlete who follows sport for sports sake and not for any pecuniary inducement. That is the broad aspect of amateurism which has always been current where amateur sport prevails, and there is not the slightest indication that any of the bodies which have replied wish to deviate therefrom.

The replies from the American associations and universities are perhaps the most interesting of all the series in that they exemplify the variations in point of detail which may accompany agreement in principle. The questions put by Professor Sloane are not identical with the five sent round to the European associations, but they develop the same opinions. The preliminary question as to the desirability of a general definition of an amateur, and the advisability of restricting international sport by such a definition reveals a large majority in favour of the movement towards unification, while all are agreed that no athlete can derive profit directly in money or money's worth and remain an amateur. When, however, we arrive at the debateable ground of expenses, we find that while five universities agree in principle with the limitation of expenses, two universities and six associations do not. The United States, we may remember, is a vast country, and the difficulties inherent upon the development of amateur sport there have rendered some relaxation of the hard and fast limit necessary. But many suspensions have been made of athletes who have demanded unreasonable expense money, and it may be taken that the associations, while limiting expenses to the actual disbursements of the athlete, are not prepared to set down any definite limit to the amount of expenses which an athlete may incur, owing to the magnitude of the journeys which he may be compelled to take. In Europe, generally, the allowance of travelling and hotel expenses is recognised, but in several instances the wise precaution is recognised of making the reimbursements through a club, and not direct to a competitor.

The question of contact might have been resolved in a more satisfactory manner had it been divided under two heads : 1^o individual competition : 2^o in the constitution of teams in such games as cricket, football, and baseball.

There is a marked difference between competition in games where team interests are at stake and there is no offer of personal gain to the winning team, and competition in athletics, cycling, swimming, and the like, where there are individual rewards for the winner. The superiority of the professional player over the average amateur does not in any way injure the general interests of football or cricket ; but were the professional runner or cyclist allowed to compete freely against the amateur in those sports he would monopolise the awards, and the honours as well. The man who can devote the whole of his time to training is bound nine times out of ten to beat the man who lacks that opportunity, and there would be many specious pretexts for the amateur to depart from the true principles of amateurism — were he to be threatened with the unfair competition of the man who made his living out of athletic sport.

The question of the professor competing as an amateur in sports other than those he teaches is also somewhat involved. There is, for instance, a vast difference between the school teacher who inculcates the knowledge of gymnastics or swimming, and the professional footballer or cricketer who makes his living by practising those sports. It may be held that the latter class might reasonably be regarded as amateurs in athletics or swimming, because he has no special facilities for practising those sports, but in the first place the professional has exceptional opportunities of acquiring physical fitness : in the second, having embraced the opportunity of gaining pecuniary advantage in one sport, it is not to be considered impossible that were similar opportunities offered in the other, he would despise them. The position of the school teacher is altogether different, and it is not unreasonable to regard him as a physician, having the development of the physical wellbeing of his scholars as his object, rather than his own advancement in the sport he is teaching.

As to the reinstatement of the professional into good standing as an amateur, there are a variety of opinions. The general view is that an act of professionalism does not altogether close the avenue to the amateur ranks, but that each case should be taken upon its merits. Some hold that requalifications should not be authorised except by an International tribunal, but presumably this would apply only to such as would affect International competition.

The lax views of certain English societies on this point do not find much support elsewhere, but it must be borne in mind that in many cases their reinstatements are not of out and out professionals, but of men whose offence lies in competing at meetings, or in events, not under their control, and this side of the subject, being purely domestic, is not raised on the discussion of an International definition. But the athlete who has embarked upon a professional career in full knowledge, should not be regarded as a desirable person in the amateur ranks even though he recants, and while the authorities of each sport in every country may reserve the right to reinstate under exceptional circumstances, the federations, were the question put to them, would probably be found to agree that a reinstated professional should not be allowed to compete in International sport ; unless his reinstatement was confirmed by an International Committee at least twelve months before the entries for the games closed.

Returning from the side issues involved in the answers to the questions put by the International Olympic Committee to the whole subject of amateurism, we may note that the Committee have already prepared the way for a further forward movement by selecting two sports for special discussion — fencing, whereupon France is taking up the question of a definition, and track and field athletics, in regard to which the study of the subject is left to the United Kingdom representatives. The reason for selecting two sports so widely separated in their aspect may be questioned, but careful consideration suggests that in taking fencing, the most aristocratic of the Olympic sports, and athletics, the most democratic, the Committee have acted with great wisdom. If a formula can be found which will unite the extremes, not so great a difficulty need be anticipated in dealing with the intermediate degrees of opinion.

The pertinent enquiry which suggests itself, however, is : What course is to be adopted with regard to the 1912 Olympic Games ? From the report of Mr. Theodore Cook it would appear that the intention is to adopt for Stockholm in 1912, as for London in 1908, the amateur definition put forward by the country in which the Games are held. There is much wisdom in the reasoning of Mr. Cook that excessive rigidity at any attempt at unification will only result in friction. But it must be realised that unless, and until, a standardised definition is laid down, the position will be as in 1908

— that the country in which the Games are held, while holding its own athletes rigidly to its own definition, will have to accept entries from other countries upon the basis of the amateur definition in force in those countries, and in the particular sports in each country, and that is the precise nature of the grievance which prompted the demand for unification.

Is it to be expected that because the British rules for athletes and cyclists deny the right of an amateur to ask for or accept expenses, countries which admit that right are to refrain from entering those of their men who have availed themselves of that permission ? Granted that the International Olympic Committee cannot issue definite orders to the federations of the various countries comprising it, there should not be any solid objection to the laying down of certain regulations governing the Olympic Games which it controls. It may be too late to enforce anything of this nature in 1912, but if the two delegations enquiring into the selected subjects should report in good time and it be found that there is substantial agreement between them, there could be no harm in negotiating with Sweden with a view of securing the adoption of the agreed formula for the Stockholm Games. Such a definition would have a force which the possibly varied pronouncements of the bodies governing each branch of sport would never possess.

Moreover in the event of any dispute the International jury would have something definite to go upon, and, finally, there would not exist the anomaly of athletes competing in one branch of sport who would not be eligible to take part in another, under the definition governing the Games. Needless to say any formula to be both acceptable and effective would need to be rather widely expressed, but it would seem that effective progress would be best ensured by securing the acceptance of wide principles, rather than debating upon disputable points. The policy outlined above may at any rate be commended to the consideration of the International Olympic Committee, who will of a surety apply to it that earnest consideration which they have given to the whole question of the amateur definition.

