

AU SUJET DES V^{es} JEUX CENTRAUX AMÉRICAINS ET DEL CARIBE

Remarks by Avery Brundage at the dinner given by Mr. Brundage to the Organizing Committee of the V Juegos Deportivos Centro-americanos y del Caribe and the heads of the participating delegations at Baranquilla, Columbia, December 13th, 1946.

Notre vice-président, M. Avery Brundage, de Chicago, a représenté le C. I. O. à ces manifestations qui se déroulèrent en décembre dernier à Baranquilla. A cette occasion, M. A. Brundage prononça le discours que nous reproduisons ci-dessous :

I have invited you here this evening because I thought it would be useful to the cause of amateur sport in which we

are all so vitally interested to spend a few hours in a general discussion of the Olympic movement and the Pan-American Games.

First I want to thank President Gerlein and his colleagues, for their kind invitation to come to Baranquilla and see these interesting games. I want to congratulate them on the success of their efforts and to compliment them for a tremendous task well done in a very short time. The International Olympic Committee, as some of you know, has taken cognizance of your splendid work for amateur sport and awarded the famous Olympic Cup to Columbia for the year 1946.

I also bring greetings from the Olympic Committee of the United States.

In the world of amateur sport, the international activities which, perfore, were suspended during the tragic years of conflict so recently terminated, are rapidly being resumed.

Twentyfive hundred years ago in Ancient Greece it was elsewhere. We of the amateur sport world recognize no superior power, political or commercial. That is why amateur sport is such a virile force in the world today and why its activities have spread to all the far corners of the earth.

Even though amateur sport and the Olympic movement have progressed to the point where they occupy such an important role in our life, it cannot be said that their path is free from difficulties. One is the almost universal desire for personal gain which leads, among those who do not fully understand the merits of amateurism, to the intrusion of commercial influences, to attempts to lower amateur standards, to demands for payment for "broken time" and to other abuses.

We live in a materialistic world today. Everything seems to be measured in dollars. Ideals suffer under such conditions. The important things of life, however, are not measured in dollars, and everyone must learn this sooner or later. In Oslo last Summer, at the European championships, I addressed a large assemblage at a banquet, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Norges Fri. Idrottsforbund, on this subject. I asked them who kept the spirit of Norway alive in these last fateful years during the occupation, and why? Did they fight the oppressor for money? No. They fought because they loved their country, their freedom and their independence. Had you offered them money for what they did, they would have been insulted.

Exclusive pursuit of the slaighty dollar can lead only to disaster. Somehow people must be taught that nothing worth while in any field was ever created with the mind on the dollar alone. In the arts, in the professions, in the sciences, and I venture to add, even in business and industry, no really great accomplishment has developed without devotion first to the work at hand regardless of financial outcome. I venture further to add that the inner-satisfaction with a task well done has meant more to great writers and artists, and even to men like Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, than the money they have acquired. The Latin Race perhaps understands these things better than Anglo-Saxons, and the following story illustrates this point:

A business man from the United States purchased from a Mexican craftsman a beautiful piece of carved onyx for \$ 5.00. Upon examining it at his hotel that evening, he thought it a great bargain and felt there would be a good market for similar pieces in the United States at a much higher price, so he visited the Mexican shop again the following day and told the craftsman he wanted to place an order for a thousand pieces like the one he had purchased, but of course he would expect a much better price for such a large order. The Mexican said "You want a thousand just like this one?" — thought a moment and said — "They will cost \$ 10.00 each". The American protested saying that it would take much less time and effort to make a thousand just alike. The Mexican replied, "That is true, but there would be no fun in making one thousand pieces all the same design. That would be hard work".

One of our most important tasks is to educate the people to the values of amateurism and to counteract the curse of materialism that afflicts our times. I am sure all of you will agree on this point. Twentyfive hundred years ago they made a breach in the city walls in Greece to receive their homecoming Olympic champions. A city with such heroes for citizens needed no fortifications. When they began to give special awards and prizes, they created a class of athletic "bums" instead of heroes, the Games were finally abolished and the glory of Greece departed.

We must make our boys and girls proud to be amateurs, proud of their independence. If they accept money or different. There an armistice was declared; it was the war that stopped while the Olympic Games proceeded without interference. The reversal of importance is a sad commentary on our so-called civilization and on the progress we have made in twentyfive centuries.

Last summer our Norwegian friends, still suffering from five years of enemy occupation, staged in Oslo the European Championship in athletics in which twenty

countries participated. It was the first important international athletic event since the war and a most successful one, demonstrating how the people of all countries turn with relief from the horrors of war and the chicanery of politics to the clean wholesome activities of amateur sport. Next year many international competitions are scheduled including the games of Bolivar in Lima. All of these and your celebration here in Baranquilla are preliminary to the Games of the Fourteenth Olympiad which will be held in August, nineteen forty eight, in London. There once more the amateur athletes of all the world will meet in friendly competition. Following that in nineteen fifty it is expected that the first Pan-American Games originally to have been held in nineteen forty two will be organized in Buenos Aires.

The year nineteen forty six marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first Olympic Games of the modern cycle held in eighteen hundred and ninety six in Athens. It is pertinent to review what has happened in the interim. In eighteen ninety six Baron de Coubertin, whose persistent efforts led to the revival of the Games, had great difficulty in inducing half a dozen countries to send a hand-full of athletes. In nineteen thirty six, only forty years after, over five thousand athletes from fifty different nations participated in the games of the Eleventh Olympiad in Berlin. These competitors were the cream, chosen as the best from millions of contestants who sought the honor of representing their countries.

Today there are Olympic Committees in nearly every nation. There are twentyfive great International Federations, promoting and regulating amateur sports, so that rules and regulations are standard throughout the world. There are Central American Games, South American championships, European championships, Far Eastern Games, Western Asiatic Games, the Games of Simon Bolivar, Pan-American Games, etc., etc.

The remarkable thing, gentlemen, is that all this has been done without money by volunteers, amateur sportsmen, who want nothing for themselves but the satisfaction of a job well done. There have been not great endowments, no established funds to draw upon. The existence of all these scores of amateur sport organizations depends solely upon the generosity of their members and their friends.

But this very weakness financially, is, in a way, their strength. They serve an ideal and owe no allegiance payment they are not independent, they are employees; they are not playing, they are working. You now have over twenty years experience in conducting the Central American Games. The prestige of being a competitor in these Games should be sufficient. If some of the rumors about some sports I have heard since I arrived are true, I must say to you that you will have to appoint a strong committee and enforce the amateur rule strictly or your Games will be ruined. It will not be the country with the best athletes but the one with the most money which will win.

In this connection I want to compliment the Cuban Olympic Committee for the manner in which they have cleaned house. I have also been told that Mexico, Panama and Venezuela have taken steps in this direction. Another thing worthy of mention is the fine spirit of dignified sportsmanship among the representatives of the very small islands with limited resources and population like Curacao, Trinidad and Jamaica. I heard the head of one of these delegations say in referring to an outstanding athlete that had been unexpectedly lost to another country that if he wasn't proud to wear their colors they didn't want him.

In one of the newspapers I have read that a commercial institution is offering special prizes to the athletes who make home-runs. This of course is for the purpose primarily of advertizing the commercial institution and should not be allowed. Such prizes in any event are not permitted under amateur rules.

You will find at all times promoters and politicians who seek to benefit themselves through amateur sport and you must be properly organized to prevent abuses and excuses of all kinds whether for personal profit or for national aggrandizement.

Latin America is at the beginning of what I believe will be a long, honorable and beneficial program of amateur sport activity. I urge you to organize properly to manage this program. The organizations in each country in the various sports should join their respective international federations and not only join but also participate in their activities. At the last meeting of the International Amateur Athletic Federation I recommended that a South American country be represented on the council and this suggestion was followed so that for the first time someone from this continent is on the governing board of this important Federation. I realize that it costs a great deal of money to send delegates to meetings in Europe. It should not be too difficult however to send one delegate to represent all Central America or all South America or all Latin America.

The first attempt to bring together the organizations of the Western Hemisphere was held in nineteen hundred and forty when a Pan-American Congress was in Buenos Aires. Some of the countries here had representatives at that Congress. It was decided to hold the first Pan American Games in Buenos Aires in nineteen forty two. These Games, as you know, had to be postponed and they are now, to be held in nineteen fifty.

I expect to call the second Pan-American Sport Congress next year in Lima at the time of the Bolivar Games. Notices will be sent in due time and I hope that every country in the Western Hemisphere, including all these represented here tonight, will be there to discuss problems of mutual interest, including preparations for the Olympic Games of nineteen forty eight and the Pan-American Games of nineteen fifty.

If I may be permitted a suggestion, I think you should have a permanent Committee of experienced men like Senor Manuel Roy, Raphael Iglesias, and others that carries on from year to year to manage these Games under rules and regulations which you should adopt in order to prevent misunderstandings. I personally think your program is too long. We limit the Olympic Program to fifteen days. Sport, after all, is not the main business of life, and it should not be allowed to interfere with the main business of life. By the way you should not allow these Games to be called Olympic Games, that word is restricted to the Games which are to be held in London in nineteen forty eight.

Sport occupies a most important place in our life today, and rightly so. When I speak of sport I mean, of course, amateur sport for so-called professional sport is not sport at all, it is business. Sport is fun, play, recreation, it has nothing to do with business, commerce, or money-making of any kind. We all know that many of the most important lessons of life can be learned on the athletic field where good sportsmanship prevails. The athlete finds that he has to depend on his own efforts for success. He learns that thought, dreams and ideas must be transmuted into action in order to produce results.

Here too, is a high level of democracy found in few other lines of endeavor. In many democratic countries, with the passage of time and with changed conditions, the people have strayed far from the original aims, a government of the people, by the people and for the people, where all have equal opportunities and equal rights, but on the fields of amateur sport now as always, by the way nature of things, the athlete who can run the fastest, or who can jump the highest will win the prize regardless of political creed, social standing, wealth or religion. It is for these sound reasons that the position of sport in our life today is so secure. And I can tell you that never were the leaders of amateur sport more determined to keep this enviable position.

At the recent meeting of the International Olympic Committee with the representatives of the great International Federation in Switzerland, the following statement was issued :

" The delegates of the International Amateur Sport Federations, assembled in Lausanne, for the first time after the world war, on the third of September, nineteen forty six, together with the Executive Committee of the I. O. C. reaffirm their devotion and allegiance to the highest principles of amateur sport and its promotion throughout the world in full conformity with Olympic ideals, excluding all political and commercial influences. They also jointly declare their determination to resist with all their strength any attempt to undermine their work. "

The world is sick and in a turmoil. People are confused and bewildered. Many strange theories, queer philosophies and curious political doctrines are being promulgated. Perhaps the antidote may be found on the playing fields where good sportsmanship, which is nothing more or less than the Golden Rule, prevails.

The Olympic movement, gentlemen, is fifty years old, but it has only made a good start. Not until, by precept and example, we bring the people of the world to a realization of the fact that only when the spirit of fair play prevails, not alone on the fields of sport, but also in the greater arenas of commerce, of industry and of politics will it be possible to exist peacefully and to develop fully the potentials of this wonderful world in which we live.

I apologize for taking so much of your time. If there are any questions which you should like to ask, I shall be glad to try to answer them. Thank you.
