

FROM HELSINKI TO LAUSANNE

Speech given by President Avery Brundage when accepting the Keys of Office of I.O.C. from Ex-President J. Sigfrid Edström at Dinner Given by City of Lausanne, August 14th 1952.

Before saying anything else, I must thank Mayor Graber and his colleagues of the City of Lausanne for this delicious dinner we have enjoyed, and for the gracious hospitality they have extended not only tonight but on many other pleasant occasions. It is not entirely because our office and headquarters are in Lausanne that we feel at home here. More important is the friendly and truly Olympic atmosphere that you and the other citizens of this city have created for us.

However, this is not a completely happy occasion. We are sad tonight because we are losing our leader, the President who has guided us and given us the benefits of his experience, his ability and his wisdom for so many years. It was President Edström who, after the death of President Count Baillet-Latour during the war, held the Committee together and who took steps immediately after hostilities ceased to reorganize and revive it. During his tenure of office the Olympic movement has not only grown in size and power, but also has been held to a true course through his strong personality. The Games of the 15th Olympiad in Helsinki were by far the greatest Games ever held, a tremendous success from every point of view, and our Finnish friends can be proud of the excellent facilities, the efficient management, and the gracious hospitality they offered to the sportsmen of the world. Everyone present, competitors, officials, and spectators left with renewed faith in humanity, and a revived hope for a peaceful world. A large part of the credit for the outstanding success of these Games must be given to President Edström.

Many international meetings designed to promote international cooperation and good will produce only international friction, but the Olympic Games, despite the high tension under which the participants operate

during the strenuous competitions, produce only friendship and harmony.

Why is this? In less than sixty years the Olympic movement has spread to every corner of the globe. Survey the whole of history and nothing like this amazing march of amateur sport, despite geographic difficulties, the obstacle of many languages, and notwithstanding the different stages of physical, intellectual and social advancement, not only into every nation but into practically every community. Not even the great religions spread so far or so fast. Today over eighty National Olympic Committees are recognized by the International Olympic Committee.

The Olympic Games are a success because of two reasons. First, they are strictly amateur. There are no large funds or huge endowments. Those who participate, both athletes and officials, being amateurs, seek to contribute to the Olympic movement and not to get something from it. Second, because they are completely independent and the Olympic movement owes allegiance to no superior force. It is concerned only with sport and it recognizes no higher power, political or commercial. The Olympic Games must be kept that way, spontaneous and independent. Sport must remain free from dollar signs, and from political intrigue. It must not be used by any individual, by any group, or by any nation for his or its selfish purpose.

What are we going to do to strengthen the Olympic movement? First, we are going to seek for closer and more intimate cooperation between the National Olympic Committees, the International Federations, and the International Olympic Committee. The Olympic Games of the modern cycle are only fifty years old. In the beginning there were no rules or regulations, no precedents to guide us. It is a wonder they are as well organized and conducted as they are, and it is only through the cooperation of the International Federations which are represented here tonight by our friend, Gaston Mulleg, President of the Fédération internationale des sociétés d'aviron, among others,

and the National Olympic Committees which have a stalwart representative here in the person of Marcel Henninger, President of the Swiss Olympic Committee, that we can expect to hold high the torch of Olympic idealism.

Second, we must strive toward better officiating. The judging at Helsinki was perhaps less open to adverse criticism than at previous Games, but it was still far from perfect.

Third, because of their popularity the Games have grown to such a size that it is almost impossible to organize them efficiently. Not only that, but because of this size, the expense involved has mounted to astronomical figures. Means must be found to cut them down to manageable proportions.

Fourth, we must create more respect for amateurism. We live in a materialistic age and everything seems to be measured in dollars, but the most important things in life cannot be measured by money and exclusive pursuit of the almighty dollar leads only to disaster.

Fifth, we must keep a happy balance between justifiable national pride and the use of sport for national aggrandizement. If the Games become contests between the hired gladiators of various nations with the idea of building national prestige or proving that one system of government is better than another, they will lose all purpose. Legitimate sport must be free, independent, and spontaneous if it is to survive.

It is perhaps very significant that our home is here in Switzerland where, despite the incessant swirl of European politics, this small country has kept its independence for seven hundred years while other larger and stronger nations have lost theirs. And how has it kept its independence? By minding its own business and not meddling in other people's affairs, and by being prepared to resist all movements against its freedom. True descendants of William Tell, who refused to doff his hat to any aggressor.

Today the Olympic Games have captured the imagination of the world. Every newspaper, even in the most remote country, has been filled with Olympic stories. It is the same with radio no matter what the language. In the United States more than fifty million people witnessed and listened

to a television program staged by Bob Hope and Bing Crosby for the benefit of the United States Olympic Committee. Everyone wants a connection with the Olympic Games. We must be careful and keep our proper balance, remembering that we are concerned only with sport and not with politics or business. At the same time, we must prevent others from exploiting or using our prestige for their own personal purpose. Our sole strength is our independence and our high ideals. We have no money and we have no army. To protect ourselves against those who wish to take advantage, we must keep our motives pure and honest, and clean and we will retain the respect of all.

We live in a world that is sick socially, politically, and economically. It is sick for only one reason—lack of fair play and good sportsmanship in human relationships. Fair play and good sportsmanship are inherent in a great majority of mankind of every class, color, or creed. And that is why the Olympic movement has such universal appeal. There are natives in Peru and Bolivia who live very well under most difficult conditions over four thousand meters up in the Andes. When they are transported down to sea level, however, many of them become an easy prey to illness and soon die. We must keep the Olympic movement on Olympic heights of idealism for it will surely die if it is permitted to descend to more sordid levels. It is a precious thing that we must guard and protect. The world is in a turmoil; people are confused and bewildered by strange theories, alien doctrines, and queer philosophies. We cannot cure these things, but we can set a good example, and perhaps here the world will find a solution for its troubles.

I am grateful to the members of the International Olympic Committee for the confidence they have displayed in me, and I am deeply appreciative of the great honor they have conferred on me by naming me to the highest position in the world of sport, but I am also well aware of the heavy responsibility involved. With the help and support of all those who believe that amateur sport and the Olympic Games must be kept free and independent, pure and honest, however, I am certain that we shall be able to discover the solution to all the difficult problems that confront us.