

## The President of the I. O. C. and the press.

Mr. Avery Brundage has just completed an "olympic" tour in Europe. He has visited successively Budapest, Vienna, Innsbrück, Lausanne, Rome, Garmisch, München and London. Owing to the importance of his personality it is easy to understand why he aroused the interest of the press who published lengthy accounts about him in the newspapers. Mr. Brundage acquitted himself well when he kindly granted all the interviews desired of him. We are pleased to admit the fact that the majority of the journalists gave an exact interpretation of the views as the President expressed them to the press. After his return to America, Mr. Brundage gave the press his impressions resulting of his European tour. Unfortunately certain press agencies put the wrong construction on the informations given by the President of the I. O. C. or imparted them with a meaning of their own making and worked to such a purpose (We content ourselves with quoting two of the most striking examples) found in the newspapers *L'Equipe* from Paris and the *Sport* from Zürich, who always draw their informations and are inspired by news received from foreign sources, and though not acting with evil intent, obviously have launched a very sharp attack of Mr. Brundage's attitude.

In order to give our readers and the press in general, a true light on the matter, we have asked Mr. Brundage to kindly reply

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to certain questions with regard to the attacks which have been made upon him recently. We can think of nothing better to do than to publish shortly the letter that Mr. Brundage has sent us and which make all comments on our part needless.

*Chancellery of the I. O. C.*

Chicago, October 27, 1953.

Mr. Otto Mayer  
Chancellor of the I. O. C.  
Mon Repos  
*Lausanne.*

Dear Mayer:

Your letter of October 21, enclosing a page from *Sport*, Zürich, containing the article entitled "Olympisches Wetterleuchten", has had my attention. The remarks attributed to me in the story from *L'Equipe*, which is quoted in *Sport*, are a complete and undiluted fabrication. I have never made such statements either publicly or privately. This extract from *L'Equipe* confirms *Sport's* view as expressed in the first paragraph of its article that press reports must be examined with caution.

So far as Sport-Totos are concerned, at a Press conference in New York City on my return from Europe, I deplored the fact that the United States Olympic Committee has no similar source of revenue (it is against the law in the United States). On many occasions I have mentioned the fine work that is being done in European countries by National Olympic Committees with Sport-Toto money, particularly in Italy and Austria where sport fields are being constructed and amateurism and Olympic ideals are being promoted in the schools and clubs.

I admit the charge of intolerance contained in *L'Equipe's* article. I *am* intolerant with professionals who seek to compete as amateurs just as I am intolerant with all other forms of dishonesty, of cheating and of fraud.

So far as "State Amateurs" are concerned, a circular letter has been issued on this subject and it will be discussed at length at our meetings with the International Federations and National Olympic Committees next Spring. Athletes subsidized and given special benefits by their government to participate in sport are no more amateurs than students here in the United States who are subsidized and given special benefits by educational institutions to play football. (Educational leaders have long since recognized the scandalous conditions existing in college football in the United States and are endeavouring to clean house. As a result it has been dropped or curtailed in many institutions.)

As to *L'Equipe's* reference to my "golden Leben" (Golden Life), you may inform them that every penny that I have ever had has been earned through my own efforts.

The statement that pure amateurism practically does not exist even in America, which is made in the *Sport* article, is utterly ridiculous. Sport, true sport, must and can only be amateur. If it is not, it is merely a branch of the entertainment business and not sport at all. Is it forgotten that Adhemar Ferreira da Silva, Brazilian hop, step and jump Olympic winner, refused to accept a gift of a house for his family (which he no doubt needed), in order to keep his amateur status? Is it forgotten that Knute Gleie, the

clever Danish breast stroke swimmer and world record holder, lost his Northern championship because he refused to neglect his studies and his work in order to train for that event? Is it forgotten that Jeannette Altwegg, Olympic figure skating champion, refused many lucrative offers because she valued her amateur status more. Is it forgotten that countless thousands of others in all parts of the world in ever increasing numbers, believe that sport is fun and only fun and enjoy their athletic activities as amateurs without making demands for special consideration of any kind?

It seems to be fashionable in journalism today to tear down instead of to build up. If a banker absconds, it is featured in the press, but nothing is said about the 100 000 others who are true to their trust. If a prominent amateur turns professional it is given wide publicity, but there is no news in the fact that 999 others remain amateur.

There are cheaters, of course, in sport the same as in other fields of endeavour. Amateur sport organizations have to rely on the honesty of others, and unfortunately, have no police or army to help them. Our journalistic friends would help the cause more by unearthing and exposing dishonesty than by depreciating the efforts of those who are trying to keep sport pure and clean.

*Sport*, as it indicates in its article, can very well be suspicious of the origin of these outrageous attacks on amateurism, the Olympic code and the I. O. C.

Sincerely,

Avery Brundage.



MR. AVERY BRUNDAGE GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAUSANNE IN SEPTEMBER LAST.

*From l. to r.: Mr. Marcel Henninger, President of the Swiss Olympic Comm.; the President of the I. O. C. speaking; the chancellor of the I. O. C.; Mr. Jean Weyman, General Secr. of the Swiss O. C.; from the back: Mr. Goldsmith, representative of the U. S. A. Agency « Associated Press ».*