

Memorandum for Press release

(sent to the Press by Mr. Avery Brundage on Nov. 23d, 1953)

Certain stories have appeared in European newspapers recently quoting me as having taken a position against Sport-Toto money for Amateur Sport. This is a complete fabrication without any basis of fact whatsoever. I have never at any time publicly or privately expressed anything but commendation for the fine work that is being done in a large number of European countries with funds derived from the Sport-Totos. Athletic grounds and other facilities have been provided, athletes are being coached and trained, and students are being taught the principles of amateurism and the philosophy of the Olympic movement in many countries. These developments are highly beneficial and merit the approval of everyone. Of course there must be no infringement of the independence of the National Olympic Committees concerned.

My attention has been called to various newspaper articles which have stated or intimated that the letter on the subject of "State Amateurs" circulated by me recently was directed especially at the countries behind the so-called Iron Curtain. This is not true. The subject of "State Amateurs" has been under consideration by the I. O. C. for at least 20 years. Even before the Second World War, and therefore before there was an Iron Curtain, the I. O. C. took a position against this practice of subsidizing athletes. Rumors have reached us that there are "State Amateurs" (who, of course, are not amateurs at all) in countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and the circular letter which I wrote applies to them, wherever located.

Since amateurism has no connection with politics, there is no reason why there should not be individuals who participate for sport's sake and without thought of material advantage behind the Iron Curtain unless, of course, there is political interference.

Some of these newspaper articles have also intimated that the proposals to reduce and simplify the program of the Olympic Games which are being studied by the I. O. C. were directed at the countries behind the Iron Curtain. This is also erroneous since many of these proposals were also in existence before there was an Iron Curtain. As early as 1936 there was a more or less general realization that the participation in the Olympic Games had become so large and the program so extended that only the largest and most wealthy countries could afford to organize them. Proposals for simplifying the Games have come from all over the world and they are still being studied by the I. O. C.

At the session in Mexico City the proposal to eliminate all team sports was considered. It was decided not to eliminate a sport simply because it was a team sport. This

does not mean that a team sport might not be eliminated for a different reason. It was also decided not to eliminate all events for women. This also does not mean that all the present events for women will be retained.

In all these matters the I. O. C. naturally intends to proceed cautiously and with care for the best interests of amateur sport and the Olympic Movement throughout the world.

A number of articles have appeared recently claiming that amateurism in sport no longer exists, that amateur organizations should stop wasting their time trying to enforce the amateur rules, and that the Olympic Games should be thrown open to all. Such stories show an abysmal ignorance of the philosophy of sport and the Olympic Movement.

Perhaps amateur organizations should be criticised for not having done more to educate the public on this subject but it should be remembered that amateur sport bodies have little or no money and depend entirely on the services of volunteers who have their own work to do also.

No one can very well be satisfied with existing conditions but, on the other hand, when one considers that the entire structure of organized international amateur sport with all its vast ramifications has been created from nothing in less than 60 years and entirely by volunteers, one can only marvel at the accomplishments.

We live in a materialistic world where sometimes everything appears to be measured in dollars. It is all the more amazing that such an idealistic enterprise as the Olympic Movement has grown and prospered in such an atmosphere. But it is also a testimonial to the innate good in Man and his desire for a world which is ruled by honesty, by fair play and by good sportsmanship — a world where all have an equal opportunity — where victory depends on ability, hard work, personal skill and efficiency, and where the reward is based on merit.

Sport is fun, amusement, play, and any physiologist will tell you it is a necessary part of life. Athletes who are paid directly or indirectly for their performances are not playing, they are working. This introduces an entirely different aspect: the competition. The Olympic Games are as free from dollar signs as possible and we intend to keep them that way.

Avery Brundage,
President I. O. C.
