

Speech of President Avery Brundage

given on Jan. 3d. 1955 at the Pan-American Sport Congress in Mexico.

You are assembled here gentlemen for the IV Pan-American Sport Congress and I think it is appropriate to reflect a moment on how there happens to be a Pan-American Sport Congress.

Games for the western Hemisphere were originally suggested by my predecessor, Count Baillet Latour, on a visit to South America more than 30 yrs. ago.

It was not until 1940 that anything was done, however. In that year at the initiative of CADCOA, (Confederación Argentina de Deportes - Comité Olimpico Argentino) under the presidency of Dr Palacios a congress was called in Buenos Aires, and the foundations were laid. The first Pan-American Games were to have been staged in Buenos Aires in 1942 but were cancelled because of the war and were not held until 1951.

The ancient Greeks in the Golden Age stopped their wars and proceeded with their Games.

In 2500 yrs. we have made a great advance : We stop our games and proceed with our wars.

Under the able leadership of Dr Valenzuela, President of CADCOA and the generous patronage of President General Peron, the 1st. Games were a great success. It is Argentina that can be called the mother of the Pan-American Games.

The child was fortunate to fall into Mexican hands At the invitation of the

Confederacion Deportiva Mexicana the 2nd. Games were awarded to Mexico City, and that is why we are here. The organization was entrusted to Senator Guzman Willis who is a former athlete himself and he and his Colleagues on the organizing committee have done a magnificent job. Up in the U.S. we expect Southern Californians to claim every thing but you may be surprised to learn that in Los Angeles they are claiming credit for this fine organization because Senator Willis went to the University of Southern California. 23 nations have sent teams and we can look forward to competition second only to the Olympic Games.

You will find the Olympic flag flying at the Stadium for these games are held under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee and in conformity with its regulations. The I.O.C. looks with favour on these Regional Games since they bring to the attention of additional thousands of people, competitors and spectators alike, the high principles-of the idealistic Olympic movement.

We cannot stop wars, but we can set a good example and not until the rest of the world is governed by the same ideas of fair play and good sportsmanship can we expect a secure and peaceful existence.

The two great dangers that face us today are interference from political and from commercial interests. Business is business and sport is sport. It is imposible to mix

them. There is no such thing as so called "Professional Sport". Professional Sport is a branch — and a perfectly legitimate branch — of the entertainment business, it is not sport at all.

The Olympic Games are confined to amateurs and the minute that restriction is removed there is no more reason for them. No one can make money from the Olympic Games ; why should altruistic sport leaders like yourselves and thousands of others contribute their time and money if the competitors are to be paid. And why should the competitors contribute their time and energy if others are to profit.

Latin Americans should be strong supporters of Amateurism because of their great love for liberty and freedom. One great difference between professional athletes and amateurs is that amateurs are free and professionals are not, they are the property of the one who pays them.

National Olympic Committees according to Olympic rules must be free, independent, and autonomous. Obviously no national organization can resist effectively if its government seeks to take control and use sport as a political instrument for either personal or national aggrandizement.

But countries without free and independent athletic organizations lose the benefit of international recognition and consequently the privilege of this sort of competition for its athletes.

This must be explained to governments that seek to impose political control on their sport organizations. Governments should initiate and carry on programs of physical culture, recreation, and health for their citizens but complete independent control of competitive amateur sport both national and international, must be left with the national federations and National Olympic Committees.

You can see an example of this happy state of affairs here in Mexico, where President Ruiz Cortinez and his Government made an appropriation and turned it over to Senator Willis and his organizing committee to be used without political interference of any kind.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of attending the Bolivar Games in Caracas where a similar condition existed. After the opening ceremonies I complimented the President of Venezuela on the attractive arrangements and on the absence of any political demonstrations. He replied with a smile " Ah ! but that is the best politics ..

The dynamic General Clark as President of the "Commission Permanente., has prepared a long agenda. I am sure the accomplishments here will be beneficent for sports in general and especially for America, and I wish you success in your work.

It is your obligation to keep the Pan-American Games free from dollar signs and from political intrigue.

Thank you.