

# More active National Olympic Committees

from

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The International Olympic Committee has often been chosen as the target for criticism of one kind or another - criticism which has been well or feebly founded, more or less justified, objective or biased. Some, for instance, have accused the International Olympic Committee for standing by principles of amateurism 'now long outdated', while others, on the contrary, have tried to pin the blame on it for failing to find an all-embracing form for their strict, general observation.

The International Olympic Committee has always shown a willing readiness to give such criticism its most careful attention, to study any suggestions and proposals that may have been submitted for its consideration ;

to condemn manifestations blemishing the Olympic ideal. And yet, certain undesirable manifestations occasionally do continue to occur.

The question naturally comes up if the International Olympic Committee is all by itself in a position to find a solution to all arising problems, if it can at one and the same time exercise both supreme judiciary and executive powers. The answer is - undoubtedly not ! It is for this very reason that the National Olympic Committees have come into being, adhering in their activities to statutes reflecting the principles of the Olympic Movement.

Hence the issue - do the National Olympic Committees really play the part of active

assistants to the International Olympic Committee in a manner which would justify its full confidence in them ?

To judge by infringements against the Olympic principles witnessed here and there which have furnished the ground for criticism against the International Olympic Committee, it would appear in general that such National Olympic Committees which have allowed or tolerated violations could hardly be considered as true assistants of the International Olympic Committee.

Before every National Olympic Committee lie broad fields of activities and in the first place a correct initiation of youth to sport and sportsmanship on the basis of the Olympic ideals. No one will deny the great advantages of a parallel development of mind and body, with a view to creating a harmonious human individual ; the preservation and improvement of the health of a people through mass sporting activity ; the attainment of a high degree of perfection on a truly amateur basis ; the consolidation of friendship among sportsmen the whole world over in the struggle for the preservation of peace.

These are fine principles, but they cannot be realized by way of the spoken word alone. Lectures on education would be of no use to a child unless accompanied by concrete conditions for the formation of appropriate habits. We do not need words, but deeds ; not merely slogans and devices, but a realistic pedagogical approach.

Wherever necessary, the National Olympic Committees could be of assistance to the respective unions or national sporting organizations to help to raise the level of physical culture and sport in educational institutions, from the first grade to the University. One can still meet pedagogists who would gladly substitute sports and physical education classes by some purely scholastic subjects ; these are people who have failed to realize the pedagogical significance and importance of correctly applied and practised education in physical culture.

On principle the National Olympic Committees should not stand aloof from the problem of bringing sport within easy reach of the great mass of the people. They could help sponsor sporting activities among the working people of town and country by the creation of sporting centres at all big plants, enterprises and departments and offer its experience and expert advice in the realization of building schemes not only in the capital but throughout the country as a whole.

Truly, why shouldn't, the National Olympic Committees give an award to an athlete having shown the best sportsmanship during the year, to the trainer achieving the best pedagogical results ? Why couldn't sport writers and reporters be encouraged to illustrate their works by examples of good sportsmanship and camaraderie shown on the track or playground ?

One of the basic duties of every National Olympic Committee is to safeguard amateur sportsmen from the influence of professionalism. But here too, good intention, the spoken or written word alone are hardly enough. Might not a certain demand be made on the sportsmen themselves ? Could not some sort of control be established, for instance, to check whether their progress in sports has been to the marked detriment of their studies or work. Could they not be suspended from sports provisionally, until such time as they resume a normal level of work or studies ?

At the press conference of the 53rd Session held in Sofia, International Olympic Committee President Avery Brundage emphatically stressed that the International Olympic Committee has no armed forces to ensure general control over the observation of amateurism in the world. Accordingly, the International Olympic Committee would rightly like to rely on the National Olympic Committees, on their good faith as guardians of the Olympic principles. But, in order that this trust might be justified, it would be useful, wherever necessary, to broaden the scope of activities of the National Olympic Committee.

Does the International Olympic Committee, on its part, consider that its existing relations with the National Olympic Committees are sufficiently close ? The representatives of the National Olympic Committees are called periodically to meet on the Executive Council of the International Olympic Committee in order to study, jointly with representatives of the international sport federations, questions of a more or less practical nature, rather than to report on their educational activities in the spirit of the Olympic principles.

Such educational report would stimulate friendly, noble emulation ; it would result in a valuable interchange of experience and closer contact with the International Olympic Committee. The National Olympic Committees might then become true assistants of the International Olympic Committee and the causes for criticisms addressed to the International Olympic Committee might indeed be fewer and unwarranted.