

Verdict of not guilty for want of evidence

The natural reaction (doubtless a very human one) felt by any champion whose status of real amateur is questioned, is to say:

'Just go and see what happens elsewhere!'. To this remark follows the equally logical retort: 'Give us proofs of your amateur status' so true is this that it is impossible to accuse an athlete for want of proofs, in the same way it is impossible in civil life to bring an action against a citizen without sufficient evidence.

In the course of a recent law-suit heard in Paris, when the president of the International Olympic Committee brought an action of libel against a Parisian illustrated Magazine (See our last Bulletin), Mr. Armand Massard, Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee, who was summoned as witness in the libel charge, aptly remarked to the distinguished President of the Tribunal hearing the case: 'In the eyes of the law does one ever suspect the sincerity of the formal oath of the witness, when, with raised arm, he is asked to take the oath and swear

to tell the whole truth? Cases of recognized perjury call for the application of very severe legal sanctions. Does this not apply also in the case of the International Olympic Committee when it discovers that its rules have been violated?' The above mentioned Weekly which, as a matter of fact, has been proven guilty of the libel charge, has since published a list of evidences of non-amateurism. Some of the charges do not seem to corroborate with the actual facts, but others are worthy of special attention. The International Olympic Committee has handed these imputations to the International Federations concerned which will have to answer for these infringements to our Olympic Rules since they are responsible for the affidavits of those athletes who, according to the inquiry made by the Illustrated Weekly in question, have competed in the Olympic Games as non-amateurs.

In conclusion one is entitled to wonder if every champion competing in the Olympic Games is not a guilty party acquitted for want of evidence?