

Open forum

Under this heading, we continue an idea by Mr. Otto Mayer, accustomed to publish in the Bulletin the opinions, often far-seeing, sometimes debatable, of sportsmen, journalists or simply readers taken up with the Olympic Movement. Light is often cast by exchanges of view, but it is necessary to have a common meeting place. Our forum then is open, and we invite the views of all those animated by a constructive interest in the problems of modern Olympics. So that the valuable suggestion originating in Teheran, the constructive criticism coming from Stockholm, may be known in Rio de Janeiro or Manila, we inaugurate this column. Help to enliven it, friends and readers, by sending in your articles, written in, or translated into, French or English. This page is yours.

Editor.

Today it is Mr. Jean-François Brisson, chief editor of the "Figaro" in Paris who addresses us. Mr. Brisson is passionately fond of sport and olympics, practising the one and understanding the other with rare intelligence. The survey he presents here is from a work in course of preparation. It merits attention, reflecting deep thought and a "coubertinian" conception of the Olympic Movement.

Looking Ahead

"Two things threaten the Olympic Games : disproportion and degeneration..."

"There is need for a revolution — a jolt, to sober the Games and bring them back onto the human scale."

"...The Olympic Games should not follow the movement, but should set the trend..."

These few headings underline the theme pursued throughout four Olympiads in support of a "sweeping reform" in the sense of a firm break rather than a series of concessions.

The Olympic Movement is a phenomenon apart. It is easier to state that it exists than to explain why. "Olympic" — how many makes of sports articles have experimented with the magic power of this word !

And yet the Games are threatened with extinction. At the rate they are going, they will be destroyed by their own success as fat people are by their fat — the deceptive veneer of good health.

There are two opposing trends :

There are the reformers, the majority of whom are campaigning for the abandonment of what they consider to be outdated prejudices. Down with the old-fashioned barrier between amateurs and professionals which today is meaningless, they say ; let us reject false oaths and pious lies ; long live realism and fair play.

The opposite trend is that of the conservatives, the unshakable upholders of the *statu quo*, whose leader is the very tenacious president of the International Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, citizen of the United States of America. His most faithful supporter and probable successor is the Marquess of Exeter, who distinguished himself at the 1928 Olympic Games as Lord Burghley ¹.

¹Winner of the 400 m. hurdles in 53,4 seconds.

For them the danger to be avoided is the starting of the mechanism of concession-making. If the Olympic Games are not inspired by an ideal over and above sport, they have no *raison d'être*.

Between the confirmed *laissez-faire* policy of the first and the rigidity of the second, there is room for a third attitude : one that would combine fidelity to principles with acceptance of a necessary development.

If firmness is to be observed in the application of a rule, the rule must first be made applicable. Some slight adjustment made to the present definition of amateur sport would suffice to help the guardians of the Olympic Movement to open their eyes rather than close them.

But a real revolution is called for in the matter of programmes, organization, discipline and even regarding a basic factor — the one defined by the motto : *Citius, altius, fortius*. The principle upon which the whole structure rests, this motto, by an early error in pointing, set the Games going on lines that are incompatible with the high ideal professed by its author, who cannot be suspected of having imagined the olympic challenge as a theatrical artifice, or its setting as a fair-ground : "Bolder than ever ! Roll up, ladies and gentlemen, come and see our show !..."

Paradoxically, in order to remain faithful to what can reasonably be considered as the ideal that inspired Pierre de Coubertin, a real revolution should be carried through in the modern Olympic Movement.

What was the first aim, the basic idea of this reformer ?

These few key phrases allow us to differentiate a guideline from an idea that is often imprecise and whose contradictions have involved the interpreters of the doctrine of sport in the fruitless



Will *their* Olympics take them back to Olympia ?

One thought, one way

game of using Coubertin to refute Coubertin.

"The Olympic Movement tends to gather into one shining array all the principles contributing to the advancement of mankind.

"The Olympic Games are not simply world championships, but the quadrennial festival of universal youth, the "human spring"... They should be impregnated with a sense of history, art and philosophy... They are an educative display, a schooling in noble actions and pure moral values as much as in physical endurance and effort, but only to those who raise their conception of honour and disinterested action to the level of their muscular prowess.

"... Precisely because, in the new world that is being built, sport *can* play an outstanding role

for progress and social integration, we wish it to be purer, more chivalrous, more lucid, more calm.

"The regular succession of the Olympiads should help to 'set the rhythm for sporting life, restrain it, and preserve it against its own excesses'¹.

"Before all else, it is essential that we preserve in sport the character of nobility and chivalry that distinguished it in the past, so that it continues to form part of the education of the people of today a purpose it so admirably served in the days of Ancient Greece. Humanity has a tendency to turn the olympic athlete into a paid gladiator. These two courses are incompatible."

And, as Coubertin also wrote : « One shows one's real strength in admitting a mistake" it

is no treason to admit our own when events prove them to be such.

The path of decadence he indicated when he stated that "To seek to make athletics observe a compulsory course of moderation is to pursue an utopian aim. Its adepts need the 'freedom to go to extremes'. That is why they have been given this motto : *Citius, altius, fortius* — ever faster, ever higher, ever stronger¹ — the motto of those who dare to challenge records !"

The choice had to be made : on the one hand progress, purity, perfection ; on the other record-breaking, superior performance, excesses.

Coubertin's motto became the magic spell of the sorcerer's apprentice : it led the Olympic Movement inevitably to the very thing their reformer condemned : professional sport, of which he said in his 'testament to sport' : "It must at all costs be opposed."

The first reform, therefore : three words of another inspiration for the motto. Why not *Fortius, altius, aptius*, where progress is intended to be made through moral rather than physical virtues.

The cult of speed, relaxation and effort would be replaced by the cult of courage (*fortius*), lofty aims (*altius*), and harmony (*aptius*).

The formula would tend to direct sportsmen towards a balanced and keen approach, and not to set up as their model the increasingly swift, resilient or herculean champion, who would, in the long run, become more ugly, more useless and more vain. For if the idea of sport is to be identified with record-beating, with the eagerness to know the muscular limitations of men who will deserve the name less and less — what a ridiculous situation !

¹ In reality : *braver*. (Ed.)

If the motto provides the Games with their basic principle, the oath provides the directions that are — alas — all too infrequently applied.

What, then, is this oath on which so much has been written and which has given rise to so many perjurous statements ?

Here it is in the modified form adopted in 1961 at the Athens Congress :

"In the name of all competitors I promise that we will take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams."

It should be noted that this solemn and collective promise is the symbolic repetition of the oath taken by the competitors, each of whom is made to sign the following statement :

"I, the undersigned, declare on my honour that I am an amateur and fulfil the conditions stipulated by the Olympic Rules."

"Respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them..." : this is what all competitors declare to be their state of mind before they measure their strength against others in the arena.

Everyone knows only too well what the rules require, in particular fundamental principle 1, rule 26 of the Olympic Charter and the "eligibility code" which defines the notion of amateurism.

These provisions, whose aims are certainly praiseworthy, would only be defensible if they were subjected to a control, the severity of which would seem like police action.

More liberal rules would be preferable : they would be better respected because more suited to the demands of highly competitive sport and better adapted to social development.

Change the rules, change the place, change the spirit...

Definition of an amateur¹

The new definition of an amateur might be as follows :

An amateur is one who participates and always has participated in competitive sport without material gain.

Sport should not be a means of existence for the amateur, but reimbursement of the wages lost for the period occupied in international sporting competitions does not constitute a violation of amateur status² unless it exceeds a total of 90 days per annum.

The amateur cannot avail himself of this qualification :

- a) *if he has not a basic occupation designed to insure his present and future livelihood;*
- b) *if he receives or has received a remuneration for participation in a sporting competition ;*
- c) *if his personal fortune or some external assistance permits him to devote to sport time exceeding the leisure obtainable by a worker not benefitting from fictitious employment ;*
- d) *if he does not comply with the rules of the International Federation concerned, and the official interpretations of this present rule.*

This new draft includes some extenuations. The words "sporting competitions" in the place of "Sport," indicates the intention to give the status of amateur to an instructor or trainer (fencing-master etc.) insofar as he takes part in competitions as an amateur. The entitlement to reimbursement of lost wages is also added. But other provisions imply an enforcement of controls, and social justice demanded the assimilation of

¹ In order better to mark a break with past ideas, it would be of advantage to drop the terms "amateurs" and "professionals" and substitute, for example, "voluntary" and "paid".

² This part of the suggested definition is largely taken from the proposal made to the Athens I.O.C. session by the Soviet delegation in 1961.

the man of leisure with the worker who is at the same time the "special envoy" of sport, in the phrase of the communist countries.

The declaration by the participant on his honour, provided in rule 34 and countersigned by the National Federation concerned, stating that he is an amateur, would thus be endorsed by a file containing :

— an employer's certificate countersigned by a professional or trade union body ; or an affidavit from an official body if the participant exercises a liberal profession or commercial occupation.

It would be specified in this document that the person concerned practises his trade or profession normally and has not taken leave exceeding the usual period for his occupation by more than two months ;

— for students, a certificate from the university authorities stating that the person concerned has attended his examinations punctually and obtained marks proving that he has pursued his studies normally ;

— the I.O.C. would reserve its right to verify on the spot, with the help of qualified persons, the vocational competence of certain competitors in the Games designated by the drawing of lots.

Ceremonies

The oath would be the following :

We swear that we shall take part in these Olympic Games respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them with no other incentive than our disinterested love of sport.

No change for the opening parade.

The competitors would wear their club colours for the events, except team events, for which they could wear national colours.

For the closing ceremony, all the competitors would parade in white, the gold medal winners first, followed by the winners of silver and bronze medals.

The other competitors would be grouped by event, and these groupings would be observed for the parade in front of the official box, after which free sway would be given to the gay and friendly outburst that has become traditional. No more national anthems and no more hoisting of flags on flagpoles at the victory ceremony.

On flagpoles only the flags of the three leading countries in a balanced international table of points open to modification as the events proceed.

A balanced international table of points

Although only the individual orders have so far been official, international rivalries are settled by counting the number of medals won. The methods of counting the points may be varied *ad infinitum*, but one question remains : which is the country whose representatives performed best ? It would be preferable to give a single

answer to this question, which can be answered in so many ways ; an answer that would not be based solely on victories in the different contests, nor even upon the numbers selected from each country and their total performance, which is a first essential step.

There should be a strictly technical order, established arithmetically according to the events on the programme *and taking into account the differences in size of the populations represented*, to which points could be added or subtracted in the light of other criteria.

What are the most flagrant excesses of which contemporary sport is guilty ? Increasingly narrow specialization, both in the choice of event and in the use of sportsmen's time.

Two corrections — and even three — must therefore be introduced in the compensated or balanced order which we should like to see :

The first would be to revive the fine art contests which were suppressed because of the little success they achieved. The Olympic authorities were, it is true, poorly qualified to spot the talents in a field that was foreign to them. But why not call upon Unesco to constitute juries and recruit competitors ?

Confrontations of poets and men of letters are of disputable interest, as the need for translations complicates the choice and impedes judgement. But the olympic title awarded to a musician, painter, sculptor or architect chosen from among the best, could — if not carry as much weight as the Nobel Prize, which crowns a man's career — at least become the spring-board from which young talent would be launched, an age-limit being fixed for the competitors.

The gold, silver and bronze medals awarded to the artists and counted in the total of points would thus make the first correction to the international table of points.

The fact that artists are professionals would, furthermore, be of symbolic value : it would show the distance that exists — one that must persist, as we have stressed — between two species with an essential difference : the man of talent and the champion. Artists, as creators or interpreters, realize or serve an art form and thereby enrich humanity, devoting body and soul to what is their calling and their trade.

The champions of sport, on the other hand, leave no other traces behind them than their names on the prizelist, and their image is quickly effaced from the memory of their admirers.

The second correction, aimed at combating the excessive tendency to specialization, would be made following three additional events disputed on the last day, before the closing ceremony of the Games, by ten members of each national delegation chosen compulsorily among those who have obtained the highest awards — that is, in order of priority, holders of gold, silver or bronze medals or, if these are none, by finalists in the order in which they were placed.

The three additional events would be, in this order :

- one jerk in weight-lifting ;
- one running relay : 10 x 100 metres ;
- one swimming relay : 10 x 50 metres free-style — the competitors only being allowed to take part after having completed a simple forward dive from five metres.

The two relays would be timed, the teams competing in heats.

In the weight-lifting, each competitor would gain or lose points for his team according to how many kilogrammes more or less than his own weight he could lift.

The third correction to the order would be made after studying the files of the ten competitors chosen by each delegation for the additional events. These files would be marked (3, 2, 1, 0 points), the criteria being :

1. The certificates of employers, or of university or military authorities if the competitor comes under such authorities, taking into account not only the quality of work done, but also the regularity of attendance : no absence for sickness, no absence for a training period or travel for sport apart from leave normally granted in that profession or occupation ;

2. The mark 0 would be given to those whose incomplete files did not allow an opinion to be formed on their activities apart from sport.

A women's order would be established separately by the same indices, the additional test being limited to the swimming, diving and running events.

The proposed corrections are, in some measure, bonuses for the all-rounder in the social as well as the physical domain. They are of great consequence and would without doubt — if the International Olympic Committee were by chance to take them into consideration — draw keen reactions from the specialized sports federations, except perhaps the federations for the three favoured sports (athletics, swimming and weight-lifting).

To make such a decision would in any case assert the deliberate intention to abandon the exclusive cult of performance for its own sake (*citius, altius, fortius*), in favour of balanced and perfected sportsmanship (*fortius, altius, aptius*).

Restricted programme

To safeguard the spirit of the Games, it would be necessary to limit the programme by eliminating all commercialized sport consciously exploited as a spectacle.

Only the following sports could figure on the Olympic programme :

- individual sports, not excluding relay and rowing teams ;

- sports having an universal character, that is, indulged in by at least one thousand persons

in more than two thirds of the countries taking part in the Games ;

- sports not forming the subjects of international contests between professionals to whom titles are awarded ;

- sports not forming the subject of world championships, or of some other large international competition serving a similar purpose.

If certain federations, forced to choose, opted for the Games, the Olympic sports would thus be : *athletics, swimming, gymnastics, wrestling, weight-lifting, fencing, equestrian sports, rowing, canoe and kayak, yachting, shooting and pentathlon*.

The Olympic Games would be divided in two parts.

A fortnight before the opening ceremony, the participants would run the first heats on the soil of the organizing country. In accordance with the principle that "the important thing is to take part", those eliminated would then have had their chance, and their part would be symbolized by their presence in the opening parade, which would, for them, also be the closing one...

The Games, thus reduced, would not last more than one week, and yet the organizing country would not suffer from a possible lack of gate-money. It would in fact be made free to have the qualifying heats run in different towns according to their choice, and to add pre-olympic tournaments — with awards of cups and not of medals — for other sports likely to draw a large crowd¹.

This distribution would make it easier to concentrate all the events of the Games (except rowing, yachting, canoe and kayak, the equestrian sports and shooting) in the great stadium built far out in the country as the beginning of a modern Olympic city.

Return to Olympia

For a restricted programme — a setting in the country.

A return to the origins — not to the original place, but to the true spirit, of Olympia — a return accomplished by a process of abstraction.

Once and for all remove the gathering of the world's top athletes from the sprawling, polluted urban complexes. The cities will take a back seat in favour of the country. There should be recreated, around what, in the words of Hébert, had already become nothing more than an international muscle fair, the atmosphere of a village festival, the atmosphere prevailing in the spring-time of man's history, as Coubertin wished it.

For this, provide a ring staked out in a setting close to nature, as far as possible from a city. A rustic, bowl type stadium, like the very first

¹ Here is Coubertin's recommendation : "The Games should be reserved for individuals and not for nations. But it is desirable that tournaments of team sports be organized on the occasion of, but not as part of, the Olympic Games."

one, just a hollow with the excavated material shaped into tiers of seats ¹.

This high point would be the theatre for all contests. No roofed-in spaces. The swimming pool would be next to the track inside the stadium. For protection from the weather, a thin roof supported by taut radial cables. No roads around the site, no motorized traffic. For the competing athletes and spectators camping grounds, villages of canvas or light structures.

¹ An architect — and no mean architect at that — Guillaume Gillet, had already given shape to this dream by completing the model of a crater-like stadium which, at a time when it was still thought Paris might obtain the task of organizing the 1968 Games, could have been the centre of a magnificent sports field in the Bois-de-Vincennes. After the Games, it would have been reduced to more modest dimensions. A photograph of the model was published in "Le Figaro" on 28 December 1959.

It is also to be noted that for the first time, a region, the region of Basel-Mulhouse-Fribourg, has deposed its candidature for the 1972 Games.

Yesterday and tomorrow

In the age of journeys into space and of nuclear fission, nothing surprises one any longer. Next to the stupendous progress made in the discovery of the infinitely large and the infinitely small, the few centimetres, the few tenths of seconds or the few pounds gained by the champions of sport appear negligible.

Records may be beaten *citius, altius, fortius*, the public now takes them in with an indifferent air. A backward nationalism, in which the evolution of the less developed countries and the independence of young African states are causing a temporary revival, still fans the interest in the race for medals between the countries represented in the Olympic arena, but this incentive will — let us hope — also fade away.

Meanwhile Tokyo without doubt marked a climax. The exemplary organization, which succeeded at the price of an unprecedented economic effort, was expressed in a more than ever oversized meeting (20 sports, 914 medals, 6000 competitors), and an accentuation of undesirable trends.

Untill the Mexico Games there is little hope of a change at the helm to bring the Olympic Games back onto course. With its latin exuberance and its feeling for improvisation, Mexico will doubtless take up the challenge to outdo the others ; ever stronger, ever greater, ever dearer — that is from now on the modern version of *citius, altius, fortius*.

We must therefore look ahead to 1972. Moscow stands the best chance of getting those Games. Will she be able to give the world the sobering example of a return to moderation ?

Let us wait and work for it. Let us work on public opinion, since this is our job. The probable candidature of the region of Basel is an excellent precedent.

The only concessions to the century and progress would be hygiene and communications facilities, water supply lines, electric cables and telegraph wires.

Television would reach those who preferred the comforts of home. The only people on the spot would be the young, and true sportsmen, selected because they are used to the open air and to travelling on foot.

This bucolic setting without frills would call for cutting down on ceremonies, anthems and standards, happily compensated for by extra dividends of joy, enthusiasm and fraternity.

Once the Olympic flame was put out, with the crowds dispersed and the return of silence, life would go on as before.

A new city, born of the Games, would develop as dictated by circumstances.

It would be called Olympia.

Dreams sometimes come true. Why should the one I have sketchily evoked be crazier than others in which almost no-one believed until they took shape before our eyes? Was not the revival of the Olympic Games itself a dream in 1894 ?

Rural simplicity could, then, be rediscovered far from the town, in the earth stadium which young volunteers came to dig with pick and shovel, by the sweat of their brow, without any reward but a place in its rows of seats for the duration of the Games.

Friendship would be cemented in this vast holiday camp where participants and spectators would live side in the rustic simplicity of Nature.

For in the Olympic Movement the main thing is the sporting idea. It is first and foremost a game, whatever the stakes — a joyful liberation and not a constraint. And the rules of this game require one to go in for the contest body and soul, knowing that one is playing against oneself to improve upon one's own best, that the result is not all-important and that winners and losers will be surrounded by the same esteem and the same friendship.

The atmosphere of meetings, as I have already said, should be that which is to be met with each year beside the Thames for the Oxford and Cambridge boat race.

The Olympic Games would have another significance if brought down to the human level — to the size of a meeting of young men and women from the four corners of the world chosen for their exemplary and representative character : exemplary because drawn from the category of those who can still be called amateurs insofar as sport is for them neither an aim in itself, nor even a temporary means of livelihood ; representative because chosen in a proportion esta-

blished according to the performance of all sportsmen in their country. (*This last point is to form the subject of an additional chapter, again by J.-F. Brisson, appearing in a later bulletin.*)

Records ? There will be other championships to establish them. The Olympics would not even keep a count of them. In order to avoid temptation, the rules for the events would be changed at each olympiad, and the athletes would run barefoot on the grass.

Before the close of the Games, on the last day, the additional events intended to establish the revised international order could even be enlivened with improvised games : various obs-

tacle races, mixed jumping events, skilled throwing events, the winners of which would receive places in the final order. Thus the hours before the closing parade and the extinction of the flame — the parting signal — would be passed in a relaxed and gay manner.

Nothing justifies the assumption that the public would be indifferent to this renewal of the Olympic spirit ; they would be more likely to grow tired of the monotony of the phenomenal efforts of champions whom the future promises, if things do not change, to make less and less human, more and more mechanical, more and more specialized. *Jean-François Brisson.*