

Address  
by  
Mr. Avery Brundage,  
President  
of the I.O.C.

In Mexico some time ago, during a discussion of the Games of the XIXth Olympiad, which will be staged there next year with considerable distinction, in my opinion, a Mexican friend said in a disappointed tone of voice " but we won't win many medals ", as if that were the only objective. This same sentiment I have heard expressed in other countries. This is all wrong and one of our most urgent tasks is to convince people that the sole purpose of the Olympic Movement, which I have called the most important social force in the world today, is not the winning of medals. It is not even the primary objective !

It must always be remembered the Olympic Games are far more than an ordinary sport competition. They are a great festival of the youth of the world organized to promote international amity, mutual understanding, peace and good will, as well as to draw attention to the high principles of the Olympic Movement, good sportsmanship and fair play, the devotion to the task rather than to the reward, and the development of the complete man rather than a narrow specialization. Perhaps this is not always apparent since sometimes it seems that only the victor in the competition is honored, despite the fact that there may only be a fraction of a second or a few millimeters difference between several contestants. Actually, to be chosen to participate in the Olympic Games is already a high honor.

To offset this exaggerated emphasis on winning we surround the Games with fine art exhibitions and demonstrations. Most of all, we hail the participants in the combined events, the modern pentathlon, the gymnastic all around, and the decathlon and we emphasize the basic principle, "The most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." The greatest victory of all is the victory over self, and that victory is won by all those who reach the exalted level of olympic competition.

The International Olympic Committee is the supreme olympic body, but it is to the National Olympic Committees that we must look for the promulgation of olympic principles and ideals, for the development of the Olympic Movement, and for the creation of the "olympic image" throughout the world. Earlier this year I was in Spain to award the Bonacossa Trophy to the Spanish Committee for its leadership in initiating and promoting a national program to build and equip sport facilities and playing fields in all parts of Spain. I found a most enlightened point of view in Barcelona. At one of the swimming pools that are being placed in the poorer neighborhoods, no stands were provided for spectators. When I visited the Alcalde to congratulate him on the progress being made, he said, "we are not interested in spectators, these pools are for the boys and girls of the city, they are part of our school system, which includes physical as well as mental education".

In Barcelona also, there was an excellent exhibition of sport in art promoted by the Spanish Olympic Committee. I have seen similar exhibits in Japan, in the Soviet Union, and in other countries and, of course, the magnificent exhibition staged in Rome at the Games of the XVIIIth Olympiad will never be forgotten.

It is true that only National Olympic Committees can enter participants in the Olympic Games, but

National Olympic Committees that confine their activities to participation in the Quadriennial Games are far from fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations. It was a pleasure, after the Games of the XVIIIth Olympiad in Tokyo three years ago, to proclaim Japan the Number One Olympic Nation. For four years the olympic message had been widely and continuously broadcast and the entire population of the country had been converted. Millions of people had seen the olympic flame which was carried into every pro-

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vince in Nippon on its way from Olympia to the stadium and every spectators was aware of its lofty message of peace and good will.

Sport already ranked high in the Japanese world. Not long after the close of the war, the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States invited a Japanese swimming team for a dual meet in Los Angeles. The American swimmers were supposed to be the best in the world at that time. There was an extended debate before the invitation was sent for fear of possible public demonstrations, since before the war Japanese were not very popular in California, and the war had not improved the situation.

Before a stunned capacity audience, the Japanese swimmers won almost every event of the 2-day affair in world record or close to world record time. There were no demonstration! There was, however, sustained applause for the victors. Nothing did more to restore the morale of the Japanese people, low indeed after their humiliating defeat, than this sensational victory of their young swimmers and, incidentally, nothing did more to reestablish respect for the Japanese in California.

Olympic principles are taught in Japanese schools and the average height of young people has increased over five centimeters since physical training and competitive sport were introduced into the educational system. At the Japanese championship, during my last visit to that country, there was an announcement over the loud speaker and all of the hundred thousand spectators, men, women and children, arose and were put through five minutes of calisthenics. This happened several times during the afternoon. They be-

lieve the benefits of physical exercise should be shared with the spectators. I have seen this happen also at sport contests in the Soviet Union. The fabulous recovery in Japan since the war in all departments, business, industry, the fine arts, etc., can be accounted for by the general application of the genuine, dedicated spirit of the amateur, the devotion of the Japanese people to the task rather than to the reward. In Hong Kong and other cities, the Olympic Committees took advantage of the passage of the olympic flame to stimulate public interest in the Olympic Movement with a spectacular civic parade through the main section of the city. The Hong Kong Committee has only a small territory but it has for many years promoted an extensive program of neighborhood and group competition, and has induced the government to provide facilities, parks, playgrounds, beaches, swimming pools, etc., in all sections of the city. For forty years there was talk of African Games, but it was left to the National Olympic Committee of another small country, Congo Brazzaville, to promote them with outstanding success.

It was the German Committee that raised the money to finish the excavations at Olympia started by German archaeologists many years ago. In Greece, the committee, a few years ago, organized the Olympic Academy which conducts an educational program at Olympia each summer under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee. Every National Committee should send young people to attend this academy and learn about the Olympic Movement there at its source. The Greek Committee also stages each



four years the impressive ceremonies at the temple of Zeus in Ancient Olympia connected with the lighting of the olympic flame, which is transported by relay runners to the site of the Games, where it burns during the competitions. Other Olympic Committees can be proud of their publications, especially the Portuguese, the Bulgarian, the Rumanian and the East German and in many countries, an Olympic Day is celebrated annually with ceremonies, sports events, and speeches which stimulate public interest.

Under the direction of the Mexican Committee, a vast program of competitive sport was organized some years ago that embraces all of the boys and girls of the country, up to a certain age in the Juegos Deportivos Infantiles and above that age, in the Juegos Deportivos Juveniles. Competitions are staged in each of the states and the winners are brought together annually for national championships. Juvenile delinquency has decreased substantially, and the general improvement in national health and physical stamina has been noteworthy. A well equipped college to train coaches and sports leaders has just been completed.

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In the last thirty years there has been a tremendous development in the Soviet Union. Sport facilities have been provided throughout that vast land so that every citizen has an opportunity to participate. In the last Spartakiad or National Championship there were said to be sixty million participants — 30% of the entire population.

The Scandinavian countries all have national sports festivals of one kind or another, and occasionally international mass competitions with thousands of participants. Nearly everyone is involved in one way or another and the level of physical development in these countries is high indeed.

The Italian Olympic Committee is providing athletic facilities throughout the entire peninsula. It sponsors many sport publications and Italy is becoming one of the leading olympic countries. In Africa the Kenya Olympic Committee has promoted successful multiracial teams for many years without incident.

Mass competitions and displays with great public support involving many thousands of participants have been a feature in the East European countries for many years.

It is the National Committees which have organized the constructive sessions of the International Olympic Committee such as the 65th which we are now enjoying here in Tehran, and of course it is under the direction of the National Olympic Committees that the Quadriennial Games have been celebrated with such great distinction since 1896.

This, and of course I have not mentioned everything, is indeed an impressive record that adds substance to my assertion that the Olympic Movement is the most important social force in the world today. And the amazing thing is that all this world-wide development, accomplished in the brief period of seventy years, is the work of volunteers. There was never any money.

Even in the United States of America fifty years ago, when the Olympic Committee was first organized, there was no money. Sometimes there was not enough cash in the bank to bring back the olympic team when it was sent abroad. The public was always convinced, however, of the virtues and benefits of the olympic program and the required donations were forthcoming. When I left the Presidency after twenty-five years in 1952 there was a million dollars in the treasury. This was because the reputation of the United States Olympic Committee had been well established as an honest, just, impartial, responsible, sincere, non-political and non-commercial amateur organization.

Few Olympic Committees at the present time can be financed by public subscription. In countries where there is no professional sport, the Olympic

Committee and sometimes the entire athletic program, can be supported from the proceed of sport contests. In some countries a percentage of the profits of the football pools is given to the National Olympic Committee. Others benefit from postage stamp surcharges. Many, however, have to depend on direct government subsidy and then arises the problem of preserving their autonomy for **no National Olympic Committee can function properly unless it is completely independent. What is given, alas, can also be taken away !**

Obviously, the first task of any National Olympic Committee is to establish its reputation. Dealing with a highly idealistic enterprise as it does to have the respect of the press and the public, it must be correct and incorruptible. Since the basis of the Olympic Movement is non-discrimination it must be free of religious, racial or political prejudice. Competitors must be amateurs and cer-



H.M. Empress Farah welcomes the representatives of the Olympic Movement in company with President Brundage and H.I.H. Prince Gholam, member of I.O.C. for Iran. (Photo by Iran Press Photographers Association.)

tainly officials and committee members must be no less so.

One of the first objectives then, should be to induce the Government to provide facilities and teachers (trainers and coaches) for all as an essential part of the educational system. Olympic medals will follow in due course. Myopic concentration on a sport elite is not in accord with basic olympic principles. If there is any subsidy it should be applied to amateur sport and not to amateur athletes.

Since the National Olympic Committees as agents of the International Olympic Committee are the organizations that control olympic affairs in their respective countries, the I.O.C. is ever concerned with their well-being and is always eager to strengthen their powers and to help them with their work. Recently a special section has been

established in the olympic office in Lausanne, under Secretary Westerhoff, to cooperate with the N.O.C.s and they are urged to consult him on their problems.

To conclude, we are grateful to our Iranian colleague, H. I. H. Prince Gholam Reza Pahlavi and to the National Olympic Committee for the opportunity to meet here in this ancient land, where physical fitness has always been held in high esteem and where its progressive Sovereign H. I. M. Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Shahanshah, himself, is well known as an airplane pilot and practising athlete, and his charming wife, the Empress Farah, is an accomplished student of the fine arts, and was once captain of her high school basketball team. We will, I am sure, leave Tehran with many pleasant memories of our 65th session.