

PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY MR. AVERY BRUNDAGE,
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE AT GRENOBLE

On the 16th February at the Town Hall in Grenoble, Mr. Avery Brundage, President of the International Olympic Committee gave a press conference during which he stated the position concerning the Xth Olympic Winter Games and examined the future prospects. Here is the text of the conference:

" I will start off by thanking the Organising Committee of the Games and the town of Grenoble. One thing is sure, the Olympic Games have never known such remarkable equipment, such great hospitality, and such good food. The Press was able to benefit from perfect installations, and whilst the weather was not exactly favourable, we can't blame either Grenoble town or the organisers. Also, we can't blame either Grenoble town or the Dauphiné, because the competitions took place at 5 different sites.

We have been disturbed here, as we have been at other places, by misuse of the Olympic emblems and the Olympic words, and by excessive commercialisation, which indicates the necessity for an international regulation of Olympic words and emblems similar to that of the Red Cross.

Another topic on which our attention focused was that of advertising on skis. And there I must go back into the past: as a matter of fact, the International Olympic Committee has for some time viewed with considerable disfavour the developments in the sport of alpine skiing and was prepared to take action. Last year, there was a public announcement by the Ski Federation that there would be no advertising on skis at Grenoble. This statement appeared in the international press, and was confirmed by Mr. Hodler, President of the International Ski Federation and two of his vice-presidents as late as last December during a meeting in New-York with the President of the International Olympic Committee.

Please understand, and I hope you will make it clear, that our prime concern was not the advertisements on the skis; we know how advertising campaigns are made, same as we are aware that our modern world relies largely upon publicity. Our prime concern is the illegitimate payments to skiers by ski manufacturers. We have no proof of these payments carried out under the table, therefore our only recourse was to prevent advertising on equipment.

Look at the Olympic Stadium in Mexico, (the Aztec Stadium). It is covered with advertising signs. But those will be removed during the Games. This is an Olympic rule. No publicity is permitted during Olympic competitions and you will admit that the reason why is obvious. I don't think anyone can object to that.

After the announcement made by the International Ski Federation, we praised it for cleaning its house publicly, and you can imagine our consternation and amazement when we were told the day before the competitions started, that the International Ski Federation had ceded to the pressure exerted by the manufacturers and that advertisement on skis would be authorized.

We had wanted to show consideration for the organizing committee here, which after all was quite innocent in this matter, when the International Olympic Committee deferred any action on this incident. Nevertheless we decided to act to combat this situation, which has been develop&g for some time, and therefore we have appointed a Special Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Van Karnebeek, (Holland), to study the subject of the future of the Olympic Winter Games.

In this connection, I should like to point out that we now recognize 123 National Olympic Committees and of those 123 most of them do not have any interest in Winter sports whatsoever, and a very, very small proportion of the world's population has the opportunity to practise Winter sports at all. The commission has been asked to prepare a report and to present it during our next Session; we do not know what its contents will be.

I give some examples of anomalies. The Olympic Winter Games are restricted by our own rules to ten days. Here, they are taking 13. The last Games, I think, took twelve, the ones before that eleven. So they keep creeping up on duration and expense. In addition, the Olympic rules provide for one Olympic village and one of the objectives of the Olympic Games is to bring the youth of the world together, to live together while practising these sports.

Now, when you have games like these (and the same conditions existed in Innsbruck) you cannot expect the contestants to go up and down the mountains twice a day, and so four or five Olympic villages had to be provided, which is, in itself, a violation of our own Olympic rules. Instead of all the skaters, skiers, bobsledders and luge people living together, they are all living separately. We might just as well have five world championships.

For the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, doping and sex tests have been carried out, thanks to well-known experts and doctors, 'under the responsibility of our medical commission. The reports have so far been satisfactory.

Unfortunately, there have been some competitors disqualified in the luge and we have had almost 500 cablegrams from East Germany supporting the competitors. These competitors were disqualified by the International Luge Federation Jury and, as you know, in technical matters the Jury is supreme and nothing could be done by the International Olympic Committee even if it wanted to, and we certainly have no question about the integrity of the International Luge Federation or its Jury.

On the South African question, we must remember that the international Olympic Committee deals neither with governments nor with political issues. The decision of the majority of the members, I think, was based on the fact that the National Olympic Committee with which we deal has agreed to produce a multi-racial team selected by a multi-racial committee clothed alike, travelling and housed together, and it also probably took into consideration the express wishes of the non-white sport organisations in South Africa. I think, in the circumstances, it was only the power of the Olympic movement that could have secured this change, and this is the first time by any organisation that anything has been accomplished, for the non-whites in South Africa,

Having become the most important social force in the world today and that is a very strong statement, I agree, but I think it is, without any army, without any police force, neither without any money and only the strength of its high principles, the Olympic movement has attracted the attention of some very powerful forces that certainly threaten its very existence. There are political forces that wish to use sport for national prestige, commercial forces that wish to use sport for profit. Either one can very easily lead to the destruction of the Olympic movement.

And yet ! Political influences can be extremely beneficial if it is directed to the ends that Baron de Coubertin intended as sport is used as part of the educational system to develop stronger and healthier boys and girls and to make better, citizens.

When commercial influence has converted the sport into a branch of the entertainment business as has happened and is happening, our only recourse, I presume, is to remove such business enterprises from the Olympic programme. There is nothing whatsoever against honest sport business but certainly those who accept the illegitimate payments under the table that cannot be proved

are cheating and these are not a very good example for the millions of youth who are interested in sport for sport's sake.

This is why we stick for those millions of youth in 123 countries who are interested in sport purely for their own amusement. In a nutshell, we are trying to keep Olympic Sport clean, pure and honest and free from commercial and political-intrigue. I am happy to report that we have had a very great number of letters from organisations and individuals all over the world supporting our stand.

This is what I had to tell you. I think that sums up our position.

Avery Brundage