

OPENING SPEECH BY MR. AVERY BRUNDAGE

Of the speeches, addresses and statements made by the President of the IOC during the Xth Winter Games, we are pleased to reproduce the following ones.

Opening speech of the 66th plenary Session

Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. President Michallon,
Mr. Prefect Verger, Mr. Mayor Dubedout,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 66th Session of the International Olympic Committee will involve many hours of intense debate and careful deliberations as usual, for our problems are not simple and our task of directing and developing a highly idealistic enterprise like the Olympic Movement in a materialistic world, is far from an easy one. We are grateful to the Prime Minister of the French Republic for giving us the great honor of opening our meeting.

The Xth Olympic Winter Games were awarded appropriately, we thought, because it is a famous center of education, to the city of Grenoble in 1964.

An article in "France Actuelle", publication of the Comité France Actuelle, - an association of French business men - states that in the interim 240 million dollars have been spent in connection with these Games a great tribute to the importance of the Olympic Movement. Little did Mayor Michallon and his colleagues who presented the invitation of Grenoble to our session in Baden-Baden, five years ago ever dream, I am sure, that such a vast sum would be necessary to fulfill their obligation; we have nothing but praise for the Organizing Committee which has labored so diligently and so successfully to complete the facilities and to create the administrative organization required to stage this great international sport festival.

The authorities of the Dauphiné and the French Government itself, must also be thanked for the substantial support they have given to this project. The good citizens of Grenoble no doubt have been annoyed and impatient at times because of the turmoil and the nuisance of widespread construction, but as a result, their city will be a much more attractive, efficient and prosperous community. This is one of the collateral benefits that come to cities that stage the Olympic Games properly.

Grenoble, having advanced for many years its program of civic improvements, is now the center of the most modern and up-to-date

Winter Sports development in all France, as well as a renowned educational community, an expanding industrial complex, and a focus of scientific research.

A huge investment was required, but not only Grenoble, but the entire Dauphiné will benefit in advancing prosperity for generations to come and the returns, tangible and intangible, will be many times the investment. When one remembers the first Olympic Winter Games, a more or less informal festival of snow sport, modestly staged in 1924 in the charming mountain resort of Chamonix, with less than 300 competitors, one can realize how far we have come in the ensuing forty-four years.

One of the objectives of the Olympic Movement being the popularization of physical training and competitive sport, the International Olympic Committee can observe with great satisfaction the impressive results in the forty-four years since Winter Sports were first given Olympic status. Hundreds of attractive Winter resorts with all the necessary facilities - ski-lifts, ski-jumps, ski-trails, bob-runs, skating rinks and so forth - have been completed and millions of participants from all over the world have found health and pleasure in Winter Sports.

In addition, an enormous new industry has been created to supply clothing and equipment to these millions of participants. Eight cities by staging the Games, have established themselves as popular Winter Sports centers with great benefit to the entire surrounding region. Grenoble, as one of the indirect benefits, now has a new "Hôtel de Ville", a new railroad station, a new post office, additional roads and high-ways, a new bridge and a large modern housing development.

Winter Sport has become big business and having become big business, has attracted political and commercial attention that unfortunately is not always correctly applied. Coubertin expected the revival of the Olympic Games to convince governments and educators that physical training and competitive sport develop stronger and healthier boys and girls and make better citizens through exposure to the lofty, ethical principles of the Olympic Movement. Olympic medals would then take care of themselves. He did not dream that governments, instead of using sport for educational purposes, would make it their business to develop an elite class of the athletes to promote tourism and the sports equipment and clothing business. Are we to sit by and see the Olympic Movement, the most important social force in the world today, swamped in a materialistic tide of commercialism and nationalism ?

Let us consider what has happened in this era of expansion to our Olympic Ideals and to sport for sports-sake. The growth of public interest has led to the addition of more events and resulted in a tremendous increase in the number of competitors. Some events require mountains, some do not. It is now impossible to stage the Games at one place as required by Olympic regulations. In addition to Grenoble, they are at Chamrousse, Saint-Nizier, Autrans, Alpe d'Huez and Villard-de-Lans, spread over many kilometers and at many different elevations. Competitors cannot be expected to travel up and down the mountains to the sites of the competition twice daily. So we now have several Olympic Villages instead of one, as required by Olympic rules. The friendly, intimate charm of Chamonix has perforce departed. It has become six separate championships instead of a centralized Olympic Winter Games. Obviously, we must examine the situation with great care.

There have been complaints about Olympic regulations and the ridiculous statement that Olympic rules make liars of competitors has been published. Baron de Coubertin knew exactly what happened to the ancient Games when they lost their pristine purity through the award of valuable presents and large payments to the winners, and a class of professional athletes, who did nothing else appeared, causing Euripides, famous tragic poet, and a successful athlete himself, to exclaim : "Out of the tens of thousands of ills in Greece, none is worse than the tribe of professional athletes".

You have heard much of the complicated amateur problem. Despite all the talk it is not complicated at all. The Games are non-commercial, - they are not a business and those whose aim is to make money from sport are not eligible and are not wanted. It is as simple as that ;

Those who assert there are no longer any amateurs and who with a wave of the hand wish to dismiss the distinction between amateurs and professionals, display only their ignorance. It is true that amateurism is a matter of conscience and difficult to define, but it is a precious thing, like friendship, love and charity and the world would be a dismal place without it.

When a skier insists on being photographed showing the brand of his skis we can be sure there is a reason, even if we cannot prove it. Those who are secretly on the pay-rolls of manufacturers, those who surreptitiously accept

valuable presents which are the same as cash, those who are paid by commercial institutions or Winter resorts and used for advertising purposes with no work to do, are not eligible for the Olympic Games. If they sign the Olympic entry forms they are lying and if they are dishonest in sports they are likely to be dishonest elsewhere. It is neither smart nor clever to cheat and they are not fooling anyone merely because their dishonesty cannot be proven. If an individual wants to make money by reason of his athletic ability, it is for him to decide, but he should admit his professional status publicly and with pride, and not pretend to be an amateur. Cheaters are not wanted in the Olympic Games. Instead of being acclaimed, these pseudo-amateurs should be unmasked to leave room in the Olympic Movement for the millions of youngsters who practice sports for sports-sake, for the pleasure of it and not as hired hands.

It is here that journalists with their superior facilities for establishing the truth can assist us in keeping the Olympic Movement pure, honest and undefiled, as designed by that distinguished French educator and sportsman, Baron de Coubertin.

And now, on behalf of the International Olympic Committee I want to thank the French Olympic Committee and the authorities and citizens of Grenoble who have received us with all the traditional warmth and hospitality of France

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