

AN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT BRUNDAGE

On 22nd April, Mr. Avery BRUNDAGE, President of the International Olympic Committee, had given to Mr. Andrew MULLIGAN, a representative of the British Television, an interview which we state below:

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QUESTION: MR BRUNDAGE WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL FEELINGS ABOUT THE EXCLUSION OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE XIX OLYMPIAD?

ANSWER: Well, of course we are very sad because the fundamental basic Olympic principle is to welcome the youth of the world and it is very unfortunate that some of the youth of the world will be excluded in Mexico.

Q= WHAT IN YOUR VIEW WAS THE PRINCIPLE ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF ADMITTING A NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE BASIS OF ITS GOOD INTENTIONS?

A= Well, well, well. I think your premise is wrong. We did not admit anyone for good intentions. We extended an invitation to South Africa because it had promised to send a multi-racial team in accordance with the regulations of the Olympic Games.

Q= IF SOUTH AFRICA HAD PARTICIPATED HOW SERIOUSLY WOULD THE MEXICO GAMES HAVE BEEN IN JEOPARDY?

A= Naturally, there was grave division of opinion on this subject. It is deplorable that the Games might have suffered but you have to face the facts of life.

Q= MIGHT THE PRESENCE OF A MULTI RACIAL SOUTH AFRICAN TEAM AT MEXICO HAVE PROVOKE VIOLENCE AND ILL WILL AT THE GAMES THEMSELVES?

A= We seem to live in a age when violence and turbulence are the order of the day. We are of course concerned with the

safety of the participants and the dignity of the Games.

Q= DID THE PERFECTLY NATURAL VESTED INTERESTS OF THE HOST COUNTRY ULTIMATELY COUNT FOR MORE THAN THE EXPERIMENT OF A MULTI RACIAL SOUTH AFRICAN TEAM?

A= In answer to that question, I would say that the honour and integrity of the Olympic Movement comes first and second the success of the Games, and we were concerned with both these aspects.

Q= SURELY THE EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO MONTHS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT POLITICS ARE ENSCONCED IN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT AS NEVER BEFORE?

A= I object to the word ensconced. Politics exists. One cannot avoid it. We are doing all in our power to get political and commercial interference out of the Olympic Movement and we hope we succeed.

Q= GIVEN THE WORLD WIDE IMPORTANCE OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT SURELY PRESSURES WHICH THREATEN THE GAMES ARE BOUND TO INCREASE?

A= I'm sorry, this seems thin irony. But the more important the Games become and if, I have said this many times, as I think, the Olympic Movement is the greatest social force in the world, the greater the importance, the more political and commercial interests are going to try to use that for personal profit and national prestige. We don't like this and are doing all we can to stop it.

Q= WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THE OLYMPIC IDEAL?

A= The most important reason for the success of the Olympic Movement is the fundamental principle of non-discrimination between countries and individuals for reasons of race, religion and politics. The objective of the Olympic Movement is to make stronger and healthier boys and girls and through

sport turn them into better citizens.

Q= AT THE RECENT WINTER OLYMPIAD THE GAMES SEEMED TO BE GRIPPED BY FORCES OF COMMERCIALISM AND NATIONAL EXALTATION. IS THIS AN INEVITABLE FACT OF OLYMPIC LIFE?

A= Well it is not such a fact at all. These forces were present it is true, in an exaggerated form in Grenoble but we are taking steps to eliminate in the future as much of this commercialism and nationalism as we can.

Q= TO COMPETE WITH THE EXACTING STANDARDS OF MODERN OLYMPIC COMPETITION MOST MODERN ATHLETES FROM EAST AND WEST COULD BE FAIRLY DESCRIBED AS "SHAMATEURS" WOULD YOU AGREE?

A= Your mathematics are not very good when you say "most" Not most at all. There are 10,000 pure amateurs for every shamateur. We are interested only in the true amateur. There are such things as sham amateurs - that is just another word for hypocrite. We do not like them.

Q= ISN'T THERE A CASE FOR REFORMING THE LAWS ON AMATEURISM IN THE OLYMPIC CHARTER SO THAT ATHLETES ARE NO LONGER HYPOCRITES?

A= Is there anything we can do? We have rules and regulations and if followed there will be no sham amateurs in the Olympic Games because three signatures are on every entry blank, not only the athletes' but the National Federation: and National Olympic Committee and if there are sham amateurs in the Olympic Games, three individuals have lied. I would be very sorry if that situation exists but I don't think it does. I don't know why you conclude that professionals make thieves or hypocrites. Professionals are professionals, amateurs are amateurs, and honesty is honesty and that is what we are trying to do/ Keep the Olympic Games clean, pure and honest. That's all we ask for and in the world many are

trying to follow these principles.

Q= IS THE IOC CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF FORMER ATHLETES WHO AFTER YEARS DEVOTED TO SPORT FACE LIFE WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS OR MATERIAL GAIN = SHOULD ANYTHING BE DONE TO COMPENSATE THEM?

A= If you will excuse me, that is a somewhat ridiculous question. Amateur sport is for health, recreation and amusement of the participants and why do they need any compensation. Professional sport is different, it is a business. No compensation is required for amateurs.

Q= IN VIEW OF THE PRESSURE ON THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT CAN THE GAMES CONTINUE TO BE A MEANS OF PROMOTING UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLES THROUGH SPORT?

A= Why not? For the last 75 years, the Olympic Games which are the expression of the ideals of the Olympic Movement, have developed and expanded. Until now we have 126 National Olympic Committees which are supposed to be following the Olympic rules and regulations and there is no reason to suspect that the Olympic Games will not increase and the Olympic Movement prosper as the most important social force in the world.

Q= ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC OR PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES?

A= If I was not optimistic, I would not be here. I believe I can answer your question with a quotation of Baron de COUBERTIN:

"If ever the Olympic Flame should go out, it will always be re-lit and will carry on its way towards success".

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