

President Avery Brundage
faces the
British Press

In the last edition of the Newsletter we mentioned the Press Conference given by President Avery BRUNDAGE in London. Here are some of the questions and answers given at the time. The text is reproduced from an article which appeared in the English periodical "World Sports".

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"Which do you think is the greater danger to the Olympic Movement - political interference or commercial interests?"

"Commercial influence is the greatest danger. We live in materialistic times and for an idealistic movement like the Olympic Games to survive you have to fight for it, that's all".

"At what stage will the IOC have representatives who are in age as well as in sympathy more entitled to represent the youth of the world?"

"I admit to being an octogenarian, and on top of that a capitalist and a millionaire - to the guillotine with him! - but what do the youth of the world want right now? Let's analyse it. They want no war, right? They are unsatisfied with the materialism of the world. They want an equal opportunity. They think the climate which has been handed down to them by their elders is too commercial. These are the things they are against. And what is the IOC fighting against? We want peace and harmony - no wars. We are complaining about commercialism and too much materialism. And we preach equal opportunity for everyone with no discrimination. So I think you will have to admit that we are very much in touch with the youth of the world".

"In all sincerity and honesty do you consider the Olympic Games are still an amateur event for amateurs?"

"There are no two words more misused than 'amateur' and 'sport'. An amateur is one who loves what he is doing without thinking about the material reward, and there are only two kinds of contestants, one who is in sport for sport's sake and the other who is in it for financial advantage. This amateur question is as simple as that. It is a matter of intent. About the survival of the Olympics I have no doubt at all. If the Games were extinguished or changed, they are going to be brought up again, no doubt about it, because, as I said before, there are 10,000 amateurs to every one professional".

"But surely, the increasing commercialism in sport is going to bring the future of the Olympic Games into real doubt?"

"Take perhaps the most important sport on the Olympic programme, track and field - you have very little trouble with commercialisation there. You had a scandal about shoes in Mexico, yes. But that compared to the vast programme of track and field is nothing. The problem of commercialisation is, I repeat, in those sports which have a great international commercial development. That's where our trouble comes from. Eliminate those sports and you are out of worry".

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