

Issues and answers

Lord Killanin meets Frank Reynolds, ABC News Special Correspondent, and Jim McKay, ABC Sports caster.

Mr. REYNOLDS: Lord Killanin, as you know, Senator Tunney of California and other members of the Senate have introduced legislation called the Amateur Athletic Act of 1974, whose purpose is to encourage and coordinate amateur athletic competition and physical fitness in the United States.

I understand you were quoted as saying that if the Senate or the Congress should enact the Tunney bill, the United States would "risk putting itself out of the Olympic movement".

Did you say that and why would you say that?

Lord KILLANIN: Yes, I said words to that effect. I have studied the Tunney bill and the various other bills of a similar nature. Wanting to help athletes, to contribute to the development of athletes and facilities is a very good thing, but as I read the Tunney bill, it sets up a board of five people who will be the sort of super lords of the nominees who would run all sports. Now, this would be in complete contravention of the normal procedures which require that international sport be controlled by International Federations. Each International Federation controls in each particular country and independent national federation which is affiliated to it.

If this particular type of board was set up, the freedom of those federations might well be affected, in which case they could well withdraw their recognition of the national federations, which would mean that the United States athletes in all Olympic sports and indeed other sports, might no longer be

eligible for the Olympic Games or for international competitions.

There is the danger of the state board which I think leads to more jobs and possibly political patronage and political control of sports, which is certainly not acceptable.

Many countries have ministries of sport and ministries of sports cover all sorts of things, but usually deal with facilities from schools upwards. Some of them give grants.

In my own country, Ireland, we do not have a Minister for Sports but a Minister for Education. His assistant deals with funds for sports and that money is handed out either to the National Olympic Committee of the country or to the national federation for the development of sports, for sending athletes abroad, but they do not have nominees and do not interfere in any way whatsoever and I think this is the case in most countries. There may be exceptions, but I think every National Olympic Committee is free and independent. I would go as far as saying that is true in Eastern European countries which I know fairly well.

Mr. McKAY: Can you specify, sir, a little more closely which provision of the bill it is that worries you?

Lord KILLANIN: I think, first of all, it is the setting up of this board which would appear to be a political board, and the other thing is that I think they are also setting up a foundation for funds which is a very good thing. But again it is a matter of whether the foundation is

going to be on the private sector or on the government sector, and from my own experience, if the foundation is on the government sector, private enterprise will not contribute to this.

Mr. McKAY: One of the interests of the Tunney bill is to try to get representation on our Olympic Committee, on our federation, for the athletes.

Lord KILLANIN: This is one of the great problems. There is no doubt at all that throughout the world there is a gap between sports administrators and actual competitors.

One of the reasons is, of course, that so many high level athletes, the moment they have finished their high level competition, disappear and do not reappear again until they are rather greyhaired and old to devote their time, and it only we could get more athletes involved in the earlier stages I think it would be a tremendous asset.

Mr. REYNOLDS: The phrase used frequently to describe the United States Olympic Committee and, as a matter of fact, other organs of the whole Olympic movement is "encrusted in its own bureaucracy".

Lord KILLANIN: Let me answer for myself as President of the International Olympic Committee that it is not my own view.

I think it frequently happens, not only in the Olympic Committees, but in the administration of sport, that people, possibly elderly people, get there and they stay there rather a long time and everyone is rather polite. They get a little out of touch. I do not think this is restricted to the United States only and I think the athletes have a very poor means of communication. But, as fre-

quently as not, it is as much the fault of the athletes as it is of the administrators.

Mr. McKAY: Many people are disturbed by the fact that the International Olympic Committee is a self-perpetuating body. Some people have called it a club of basically affluent men, a private club, and others need not apply.

Lord KILLANIN: Well, that again is a question that has always been raised. When I first went to the members as President of my own National Olympic that Committee, I held the view that this should be democratized.

I have changed my views completely since then and I certainly had them confirmed when we held a big Congress in Varna, where six or seven hundred delegates attended.

Because the International Olympic Committee or really the trustees for the Olympic movement are self-perpetuating or appointed in a certain way, I think quite honestly if you had a "one country—one vote" type of International Olympic Committee, we would be in far more trouble than we are the moment. Therefore from that point of view I think the trustees' attitude is the first one.

Mr. McKAY: Lord Killanin, I would like to ask you a four word question that I am sure will require many more words to answer. What is an "amateur"?

Lord KILLANIN: Well, I know what a professional is and we are trying to define what an Olympic competitor is. In point of fact, in the rules of the International Olympic Committee, we use the words "Olympic competitors", meaning he is a non-professional. At this moment we are redrafting what is known as Rule 26, which is the eligibility rule.

It covers such things as citizenship, correct affiliations, but also the question of not receiving big favours for performances.

Mr. McKAY: You said the matter of receiving big payments.

Lord KILLANIN: In principle we disapprove of broken time, except in cases of hardship and so on.

Broken time is, where you are working for a firm and they will not pay your salary while you are away competing, and you should be compensated from other sources. The real problem is that within the different federations the situation is also different. Basically no one should be paid more than they would be earning normally.

Mr. McKAY: Do you think it right for this money to be paid by a sports federation?

Lord KILLANIN: If this is allowed, it has to be paid through or by either the International Federation, the National Federation, or the National Olympic Committee, depending on the circumstances.

The main thing, we feel, is that people should not make money out of their sports performance and therefore no more is paid than they would normally earn.

Mr. McKAY: What do you think about the rule which our collegiate group, the NCAA, has recently adopted that a man can be a professional in one sport and an amateur in another?

Lord KILLANIN: We have decided in the Olympic Games that this is too difficult to control and it is a matter for each federation to decide for itself.

Mr. REYNOLDS: Lord Killanin, I want to ask you another simple question which is uppermost, I suppose, in the minds of people in this country and around the world. What steps can the International Olympic Committee take to ensure that Montreal does not become another Munich?

Lord KILLANIN: Let us face the facts of life. If someone wants to murder somebody and they have planned it, it is jolly hard to stop them. Quite naturally, the greatest steps will be taken to ensure the control of entry into the Village and the sports grounds. These are problems that we are watching and that we have treated very seriously, but, as you know perfectly well, even in New York security is not all that it should be.

Mr. REYNOLDS: Is the question of security a major one in the determination of where the Olympics will be held?

Lord KILLANIN: I would not say it is a major one. Basically we think of the technical facilities available, with the Federations as advisers, and then we must be certain that there will be free entry for all competitors, accredited journalists and so on.

Mr. REYNOLDS: On that very topic, the question of free access, was there not some difficulty with Israeli journalists in Moscow, during the Student Games?

Lord KILLANIN: I was there during the University Games. In fact, I have been in touch with various journalists' organizations. All I can find out is that certain journalists from Israel were stopped or not given their visas in Switzerland. Now, it is not for me to know whether they were journalists or not, but as far as the Olympic Games are concerned, we work very closely with the journa-

lists' associations in each country, with the National Olympic Committee, and we are therefore able to control and be quite sure that the journalists who go are all accredited journalists.

Mr. McKAY: Are you concerned that if the Games should be awarded to Los Angeles, the State of California might decide to have a referendum and vote down the Games, as Colorado did?

Lord KILLANIN: Well, that is of course a matter for Los Angeles.

Mr. McKAY: Would you expect that guarantees would be demanded by the IOC?

Lord KILLANIN: Yes. Well, we cannot have a repetition of the Denver situation, because it cost them a lot of money and a lot of time; it could happen in Los Angeles, it could happen anywhere and it would be better to have a guarantee.

Mr. McKAY: Do you expect there might be a down-grading of nationalism at the Games in Montreal? Might we see all the athletes in white uniforms? Might we not hear the national anthems?

Lord KILLANIN: In Montreal the procedure will be the same. We have been discussing it and my views—I am in the minority and I am a democrat—are that ethnics like the anthems and I cannot see any major change taking place until after 1980.