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*... It was in 1952 that Unesco, with the assistance of the International Committee for Physical Education and Recreation, first began to include in its programme certain activities designed to promote the practice of sport. Since 1965, the annual ceremony for awarding the Fair Play trophies instituted by the International Sports Press Association and the International Council of Sport and Physical Education has given the Organisation the opportunity of being associated with a world-wide campaign whose objectives are in keeping with its moral vocation. However, it must be admitted that the activities undertaken directly by Unesco or under its auspices, whether in connection with meetings or publications, have generally been devoted to specific, narrowly delimited aspects of sports activity.*

*By contrast, the present Conference represents the first outcome of a new departure on which the General Conference agreed at its seventeenth session when, by its resolution 1.221, it authorised the Director General "to pursue and undertake activities designed to define a new conception of the curricula and structures of pre-primary, primary and secondary education*

with a view to ensuring interdisciplinary continuity in the spirit of life-long education and giving particular attention to (...) the integration into curricula of physical education”...

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... Consequently we have, in my opinion, currently reached a stage of reflection where a broad consensus exists throughout the world concerning the concept of an education that will be life-long, all-embracing and universal. What implications this has for physical education and sport it is now for you to elucidate. In this connection, the need to recast curricula, to improve the education of teachers and instructors, to increase the number of facilities available and, to be sure, to step up resources comes naturally to mind. Indeed, these are so many pre-conditions for all progress in this sphere. However, over and above such partial, fragmentary measures, the primary aim should, in my view, be to rethink the role of physical education and sport in the training of each and every individual during the decisive years of youth, physical education and sport being considered as essential and complementary constituents of this formative process.

We are here confronted with the basic problem of ensuring the access of the greatest number, in other words, the democratisation of education, a problem which faces the developed no less than the developing countries but which occurs in a particularly acute form in the latter...

... Your discussions will therefore quite naturally be focused upon this fundamental question: how should physical and sports education be organised for young people of school or university age, whether they are attending an educational establishment or not? Physical education and sport should not, of course, be regarded as dissimilar entities: conceptually and in practice, ways must be found of integrating and combining them in a single whole as elements in the education of young people, both in and out of school.

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... In a type of education which is designed to develop the all-round potential of the individual, there can be no good reason for the lowly place which is all too often allotted to the education of the body, when in fact the body provides the basis for the entire personality. Just as the purpose of general education is to bring all the individual's aptitudes into play and to gear them to the various situations which he will encounter in life, so physical education should lead on to the physical activity and the practice of sport in which every individual should engage throughout his life. The practice of sport is emerging more and more clearly not only as a necessity for which everyone must be prepared in order to safeguard his health and to occupy the growing leisure-time made possible by technological progress, but also as essential to the integrity of the human species, threatened by the industrial environment. The universal practice of sport is therefore both a right and a duty for every individual.

This ideal would, however, be merely Utopian if education did not, at a very early age, provide an introduction to the practice of sport, viewed from the standpoint both of physical development and of attitudes and values. In other words, the importance and profound significance of sports activities must be made clear, interest in them must be developed, and the need for them stimulated.

A number of your countries have already made a move in this direction by allowing physical education and sport a greater place in the education of young people and by reassessing their functions. There are already signs of a very marked reaction against the prejudice tending to relegate physical education and sport to a secondary, inferior rôle. This prejudice, incidentally, often used to go hand in hand with the rather condescending attitude towards the arts which regarded them merely as social “accomplishments” or hobbies, and indeed with a similar prejudice against anything else in education which did not appear to be closely enough linked with preparation for employment, or to be sufficiently profitable. This long neglect of physical education and sport seems to be explained by an excessively “intellectual” view of education, which placed far too high a value on its cognitive aspects and tended to separate the various aspects

of the individual's development into compartments: the cognitive, the ethical, the aesthetic, the emotional and the physical.

It is generally known, however, that sport helps to form character, calls for unflinching willpower, and tests endurance; but it has perhaps not been sufficiently realised that it calls upon all the faculties, achieving that fundamental unity of the human being, the recognition of which is the basis of all humanism. Can anyone seriously maintain that the performance of an athlete or the triumph of a team are the outcome of physical strength alone, rather than the culmination of a sustained intellectual effort to master a discipline, and the exercise of qualities of judgement and discernment? Surely triumph in sport is the reward not only for a judicious use of skills, but also for the long practice of self-discipline which alone can bring success? Conducted in accordance with strict rules, sports activities take on a moral dimension, since those who practise sport must enjoy effort, be determined to excel themselves, respect the winning or losing adversary, be modest and self-effacing in carrying out a collective task, and submit themselves honestly to the unimpeachable tests of the fastest race, the highest jump and the best throw. Anyone devoting himself to sport thereby accepts the existence of values which transcend him and laws which he freely elects to obey. I know of no better ethical training for the young and no better preparation for life in society than an introduction to sport which gives the latter its full significance and turns all its educative virtues to account.

At the same time, as it is a form of expression which does not depend on language but is immediately intelligible to all, as it clearly demonstrates the fundamental equality among people and nations, and as it provides opportunities for encounters between individuals or teams from the most widely varying countries, sport both can and should prepare people to live together in a world at peace. From this point of view, it can be of outstanding help to the great causes among Unesco's essential objectives, such as the acceptance of cultural differences, international understanding and peace. Furthermore, physical expression can be seen to be inseparable from artistic

expression, with which it is combined in a great many activities. It also helps to develop the aesthetic sense through that marvellous communion with nature which accompanies the full exercise of physical abilities in the cool morning air or under the burning sun. It is an essential factor in that affective balance and that feeling of security which any education worthy of the name should count among its major objectives...

... An introduction to physical activity and sport, combined with the exercise of the intellectual faculties and with moral training, leads on naturally to the practice of sport in conformity with the ethical code which is so necessary to it. More than ever, indeed, it seems essential to restore the ideal which Pierre de Coubertin revived from the mists of time in all its radiant purity: that of the athlete striving his utmost to excel himself and, through his efforts freely put forth, thrusting back the bounds imposed on him by man's estate. I need not emphasise, since you all know it only too well, how far this ideal has been tarnished by the commercialisation of sport; by social or economic elitism which, at the national level, often excludes the majority and, at the international level, keeps the peoples of the poorest countries apart, and by an aggressive chauvinism, which sullies the legitimate pride that a national community may take in the successes achieved by its members.

I hope, therefore, that your conference will make a point of reminding us that education for sport must go hand in hand with education through sport. The growing importance of sport as a feature of society and a phenomenon of civilisation, the attraction it exerts over countless millions, when broadcast and boosted by the mass media, the enthusiasm it generates and the passions it unleashes, make such education essential. And it will not be complete and fully effective unless sport ceases to be regarded merely as a spectator event. I am well aware that many countries have already taken practical action to meet this concern by organising sport for all, or by committing themselves to do so by joint statements drawn up at recent intergovernmental meetings. The champion will then cease to be regarded as a prototype or a star and will again become the leader of the immense cohort

of those who share his efforts and are stimulated by his example. Far from being at variance with high level competitive sport, sport for all encourages it and gives it its full value...

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I shall now briefly review the agenda submitted to you. The first substantive item, item 6, bears on the "present situation of physical education and sports programmes in the education of youth". It calls for the study of general ideas and also organisation and means. You may wish to discuss it together with the following item, number 7, entitled "Rôle to be played by physical education and sport in the education of youth in the perspective of life-long education", which is concerned with identifying the implications of the concept of all-round, democratic, life-long education for the definition of the rôle of physical education and sport in the education of youth...

... Provision is made for two commissions to meet thereafter to examine, respectively, item 8 of the agenda—"strategies to be developed and steps to be taken at the national level for the promotion of physical education and sport"—and item 9, bearing on "international co-operation for the promotion of physical education and sport", a question calling for the study of exchanges of ideas, of experience and of persons, and also of financial co-operation...

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... Your discussions, which will, I am sure, serve the causes of sport and of education alike, will contribute among other things to determining the measures and lines of emphasis most likely to bring the practice of sport into line with the ideal which

should inspire it. Sport cannot, in fact, make its contribution as a disinterested activity unless an appropriate form of education, comprising both physical training and theoretical and ethical instruction, is provided at an early age. An all-round education in regard to physical training and sport is accordingly essential if sport is to be practised along with the virtues which are its justification. The sense of fair play and the Olympic ideal can be inculcated by education, which itself reflects a certain pattern of civilisation.

The responsibility of education in regard to sport, and the fundamental part that physical and sports education should play in education in general, seem to me to be the central themes which will give continuity and coherence to your discussions. Enshrining its own ethic, producing physiological and mental balance, providing a deep source of joy for its adepts and, when practised in a generous spirit, constituting a powerful factor for social integration and international understanding, sport closely associated with physical education must, where this is not already the case, become not only an essential item in school and university curricula but also a cultural factor fostering modern humanism. All those who wish to help in building up the learning society we are beginning to glimpse on the far horizon must give sport the prominent place which is its due, since it offers us the best possible example of continuity in effort, an exhilarating but well ordered life, the sense of peace within oneself, with others and with nature, unity regained. And there is nothing which can extend this still ideal learning society to the scale of the whole world, as the common homeland of the brotherhood of man, so well as sport...

A. M. M'B.

