

Avery Brundage Speech

Opening Ceremony

62nd Session International Olympic Committee Tokyo, Japan, October 6th, 1964

Assembled here in Tokyo, 10,000 miles from headquarters in Lausanne, for its 62nd Session, the International Olympic Committee can, without a doubt, reflect on its accomplishments with no little pride. Not that its work is finished, far from it, but the phenomenal progress that has been made since the humble rebirth of the Olympic Games in 1896, and the position of the Olympic Movement today, are assuredly worthy of acclaim. Nest Saturday, in the National Stadium in Meiji Olympic Park, the Games of the XVIII Olympiad will open before more than 85,000 spectators. When 60,000 tickets for the opening ceremony were placed on sale recently, there were more than three and one-half million applications and it was necessary to hold a public drawing. television will bring the Games directly, not only to 95,000,000 Japanese, for everyone in the land of the Rising Sun will be watching, but also to countless millions in other countries by way of Satellite SYNCOM III.

Spanning all oceans, the Olympic Movement has spread and the Games have travelled from Greece, through Europe to America, to the Antipodes, and now to the Orient, winning converts at every quadrennial stage and proving they belong to the entire world. In the meantime, 118 National Olympic Committees have been recognized by the International Olympic Committee and are eligible to participate. This means they have at least five National Federations, members of the International Amateur Sport Federations, and that they are ready and eager to follow Olympic rules of fair play and good sportsmanship, not because they have to but because they believe in them. National Olympic Committees of such remote countries as Tchad and outer Mongolia were recognized at a recent meeting.

No finer facilities have ever been offered than those provided by our Japanese friends under the leadership of President Daigoro Yasukawa of the Organizing Committee. Many beautiful structures of traditional Japanese architectural design will be community assets for generations to come. Our colleague, Dr. Kyotaro Azuma, Governor of the great City of Tokyo, has estimated that preparatory expenditures, private and public, will probably exceed three billion dollars. This is not *for* the Games, we hasten to add, but *because* of the Games. The program of civic improvements of the Municipality for the next ten years has been

advanced and huge sums have been spent in the construction of new hotels and other private buildings. As a side benefit, citizens of Tokyo will enjoy living in a much more attractive and efficient city after the Games.

Nor are the fine arts to be forgotten. The Japanese are a sensitive people, they live in a country with many natural attractions and they are exposed continuously to the beauty of nature which they appreciate deeply. They have developed their own schools of sculpture, painting, architecture, music and literature quite different from those of the West. There will be many exhibitions and demonstrations, theatrical performances and concerts which will be of great interest to foreign visitors.

It is not only in facilities that new standards are being set ; never before have the Games been adopted as their own personal project by all the people of a nation of nearly 100,000,000. I have just returned from Matsue across the mountains on the other side of this Island of Honshu. where I participated in the dedication of a monument to the late Baron S. Kishi, one of our Japanese colleagues thirty years ago. They are just as excited in that small town as they are in Tokyo itself and I am sure there is the same active interest in Sapporo on Hokkaido, in Beppu at the other end of the beautiful Inland Sea and in Nagasaki far south on Kyushu.

The Japanese are a proud people — they will not be happy unless they demonstrate to all the world that they can stage the Games as well or better than any other country. They may even be more eager because they realize more than others how much tragedy, sorrow and destruction would have been avoided if the ancient Greek Olympic practice of stopping all wars had been followed in 1940 when the Games of the XII Olympiad had to be cancelled because of world conditions. Moreover the Japanese have a natural harmony with Olympic objectives that makes them want to stage the Games on the highest level. They know that in medieval Japan the merchant or trader ranked far lower on the social scale than the Samurai, whose code was based on the cardinal virtue of honour, valued above life itself, and on fidelity, loyalty and justice. A people trained to admire the tenacity of the 47 Ronin and the extreme discipline of Hara kiri and the

Kamikaze, they also value highly the discipline of sport. Heirs of the Samurai, Japanese sportsmen appreciate the philosophy of the Olympic Movement and are worthy bearers of the Olympic torch.

Certainly it takes something more than an ordinary sport festival to capture the active interest of every man, woman and child in one of the most populous countries in the world and to warrant expenditures of over three billion dollars. What is the reason? It is the same reason that led bomb shattered London, world capital, even before the damage was repaired to undertake the Games of the XIV Olympiad as its first major project after the close of the disastrous World War. Already forty years before, London had staged the Games and recognized their importance. Little Finland, one of the top Olympic nations, victim of two savage wars and shocking backbreaking indemnities, felt the same way in 1952 and staged in Helsinki, one of the finest sets of Games. In Australia, the Melbourne Games of 1956 were considered the best investment they ever made. They increased tourism, stimulated investment and business, both domestic and foreign, and literally brought Australia into the world. Rome, mother of Cities, in 1960, after seeking the Games for more than fifty years, considered the more than \$100,000,000 which it spent, a small price to be capital of the World of Sport. The Olympic Games have become and are generally recognized as the greatest of all international events. Olympic cities are set apart with a certain prestige that can be gained no other way and that is why at times there have been as many as seventeen submitting invitations to stage the Games despite the trouble and expense involved.

Just why has the Olympic Movement gained this important position? It is because the Games are far more than merely another sport festival. They are a social manifestation of the first order. In the Olympic Village here in Tokyo, ready for two weeks of strenuous competition in a score of different sports, are selected contestants from every continent. Ignoring superficial racial, religious and political differences, they are united in a desire for friendly competition, judged solely on merit. The tenets of the Olympic Movement appeal because they include the basic aspirations of all men. Black and white, infidel and believer, radical and conservative are here, all respecting the same Olympic code of fair play and good sportsmanship. In the long history of mankind, nothing like this has ever happened before. This is something to be observed carefully by every politician, every sociologist and by every educator. The great lessons of the Olympic Movement are here for all to see.

The International Olympic Committee, which has promoted the philosophy of the

Baron de Coubertin and has led the Olympic Movement to this lofty position can certainly look upon its work with modest pride. However, it is not yet generally understood that the revival of the Olympic Games is only the first phase of Coubertin's programme. The Games were to arouse the interest of Governments, of educators, and of the public in establishing national programmes of physical training and competitive amateur sport, which would assist in the tasks of eradicating social injustice, of combating the growing materialism of our times, and of correcting features of expanding industrialism and urban living that are destructive to health and morals. In addition, by extending the ancient Greek idea, which was strictly national, to all countries, they were to create and develop international amity and good will. Governments have become aware of the Olympic Movement through the popularity of the Olympic Games, but the most difficult task remains — they must now be guided along proper paths and learn that the true objective is not the transitory glory of a few medals and broken records by a highly trained sports elite, but the development of a strong and healthy youth brought up on the highest principles of the amateur code.

Educators are gradually awakening to the educational values of amateur sport when used properly and not for commercial purposes and they must follow the lead of de Coubertin, who recognized the XIX Century revolution in academic theories, and aim toward the ideal of the Golden Age of Pericles, the complete or 'perfect' man, mentally, physically and spiritually, emphasizing character more than knowledge.

The Olympic Movement is a 20th Century religion, a religion with universal appeal which incorporates all the basic values of other religions, a modern, exciting, virile, dynamic religion, attractive to Youth, and we of the International Olympic Committee are its disciples. Here is no injustice of caste, of race, of family, of wealth; on the sports field, everyone stands or falls on his own merit. Amateurism, love of the achievement rather than the reward, brings success in all spheres. Physical training conserves health. The code of sportsmanship is that of the Golden Rule. Friendly association on the fields of sport leads to mutual understanding and peace. Search all of history and you will find no system of principles that has spread so widely or so rapidly as the brilliant philosophy of Coubertin. He has kindled a torch that will enlighten the world.

We thank our Japanese hosts for all that they have done to make our visit here a pleasant one and more than that we thank them especially for all they have done to advance the Olympic Movement through their outstanding preparations for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad.