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PARTIAL AGREEMENT

SUB-COMMITTEE ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

National Memoranda on the problem of doping

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The Secretariat forwards delegations herewith the Memoranda on the problem of doping submitted by the Belgian, British, French, Italian and Netherlands delegations at the meeting of the Sub-committee on Physical Education and Sport held in Luxembourg in June 1961.

Distribution

For action:

- Partial Agreement Sub-committee on Physical Education and Sport

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National Memoranda on the problem of doping

B E L G I U M

The problem of keeping a check on doping has so far only been partially solved in Belgium.

Yet the Institut National de l'Education physique et des Sports has endeavoured, albeit unsuccessfully, to enlighten the authorities in a precise and unambiguous manner on the consequences of the use, or the abuse, of drugs.

To this end the INEPS vainly suggested that the Ligue Vélocipédique Belge should carry out unannounced tests, by way of a check-up, of the urine of cyclists having taken part in competitions.

Even the proposal that urine should be collected anonymously was rejected by the League. We therefore have no data permitting us to state in what measure competitors have recourse to drugs. We are obliged, in this respect, to rely on rumours from behind the scenes, all of which, however, seem to indicate that the great majority of professional cyclists have recourse to artificial stimulants in order to try and win.

In connexion with relay races, rumour will even have it that recourse to drugs is general.

As far as sports other than cyclism are concerned, it fortunately appears that these methods are far less widespread or even non-existent.

Experimental research on the effects of doping was carried out by the Service d'Etudes of the INEPS. The conclusion was that all drugs had both favourable and unfavourable effects on the performance of a competitor. The general result of the two types of effects was negative in the case of fit competitors.

In other words, these experiments prove that an athlete in a good physical condition has no reason for or interest in resorting to drugs.

In the hope of putting an end to this harmful habit, the INEPS gave a press conference with a view to making known the results of the experiments and drawing the attention of the authorities concerned thereto.

It was announced some months ago that regulations were being drawn up which, however, only concerned preventive measures. It was believed to be a question of authorising officials of the Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Famille to check whether competitors did not carry drugs with them in their clothing, their suitcases, their drinks or their food.

Check-ups carried out to this effect in Italy have, however, shown that preventive measures of this kind are clearly inadequate for the possibilities the competitors have of circumventing or thwarting them are too great.

It therefore seems desirable to establish an effective control in the form of a testing of urines after the competition.

F R A N C E

It may be said that all French doctors agree that, morally, doping is without a doubt disastrous.

Doctors moreover agree on the need to do away with doping. Their research particularly bears on drugs whose use may have grave or dangerous consequences for the person using them or may even result in his death.

Generally speaking, these products are the products known as "Amphetamins," but they are not the only ones.

Thirdly, an athlete (having taken Amphetamins), examined after a competition during which the competitor in question provoked incidents or accidents shows symptoms so similar to those noted in connexion with incidents or accidents which were not caused by the use of Amphetamins, that it is impossible, practically, for a competent specialist to determine solely from external signs whether Amphetamins have been taken or not.

There remains the chemical-reactions method for proving that Amphetamins have been resorted to. This method is still being studied and the studies are as yet incomplete or the use of the method in connexion with sport still presents great difficulties.

It should be noted that there is a French law prohibiting the issue of Amphetamins without a medical prescription.

A campaign (press, film, television, radio) warning athletes and demonstrating the dangers inherent in inconsiderate recourse to drugs should be envisaged.

The conclusion of an agreement with sports associations should also be envisaged whereby a competitor would be required to swear on his honour when signing his papers, not to have recourse to doping and to conform to such preventive regulations as may be established by the sports association in the light of the progress of science.

The Academie Nationale de Médecine should be approached with a view to obtaining their support for the anti-doping campaign.

I T A L Y

For the last five years doping in the sphere of sport has been less widespread than it was previously; it is, in fact, confined to cyclism. Only in isolated cases is it resorted to in connexion with football, athletics (endurance tests), ski-ing (endurance tests) and boxing. Apart from symphatic-mimetic Amines (Amphetamins and their derivatives), other psycho-ergo-pharmacological substances are resorted to which increase the competitor's resistance, lessen his excitation, anxiety, fatigue, thus restoring the metabolism.

These latter substances are not considered to be drugs for they are not habit-forming and their main effect is psychological.

It is thanks to the availability of these substances that recourse to drugs proper by athletes is diminishing.

The anti-doping propaganda of the Italian Medico-Athletic Federation and the active fight in the form of clinical check-ups and urine tests have done much to reduce the number of cases of doping and have enabled fatal consequences to be prevented. During the last three years there have been no accidents provoked directly or indirectly through Amphetamin poisoning.

However, active study is being given to the problem by doctors concerned with sport and by the health and sports authorities, particularly with a view to finding methods of control through analysis. Thus the Italian Medico-Athletic Federation and the International Centre of Sporting Hygiene held an international symposium on psycho-ergo-pharmacology on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Rome.

NETHERLANDS

1. The doping problem is at present being studied by the Medical Committee of the Netherlands Sports Federation.

2. In the Netherlands, and especially within the Netherlands Sports Federation, much interest is being shown in this problem and an international conference on the subject would be welcomed.

U N I T E D - K I N G D O M

Extract from an article on the use of drugs in sport published in "World Sport", the official magazine of the British Olympic Association, May, 1961 edition

In separate reports on the problem prepared specially for World Sports, Sir Adolphe Abrahams, hon. medical advisor to the A.A.A., and Dr. David Ryde, a former athlete who has made a particular study of such influences in sport, come to remarkably similar conclusions the effectiveness of the use of drugs in improving performances.

Says Dr. Ryde : "I doubt if the dope itself improves performance. The effectiveness of a dope, if any, depends on the faith one has in it".

Says Sir Adolphe, after listing and analysing the effects of many major stimulants : "Regarding all these aids as a whole, it must be realised that while effects are certainly produced it is a vastly different matter to concluded that the effects result from any active properties in the material administered. An athlete is highly suggestible, especially at a time of high-grade competition, and is readily influenced".

It is the alleged misuse of stimulants of the amphetamine class - benzedrine, dexetrine, ronicol, maxicon - sold under a variety of trade-names in various parts of the world, which have caused most concern. Unlike the more dangerous drugs - cocaine, strychnine and so on - these "pep-pills" can sometimes be easily obtained. As recently as last November, an article in the American magazine "Sports Illustrated" claimed that anyone in the USA could "write to a pharmaceutical jobber or wholesale house, giving a name that sounds like a legitimate drug store, include the cash and wait for the (pep) pills to arrive".

In Britain ? Until a few years ago, products such as benzedrine were obtainable on demand in any chemists, but now they are issued only on prescription. "It would be almost impossible for a member of the public to obtain supplies from a wholesaler", one chemist told me. "But anyone who has friends working in hospitals and so on might be able to get unauthorised supplies that way".

"Three years ago" recalls Sir Adolphe, "the American Medical Association issued a violent denunciation of these pep-up pills which had converted ordinary athletes temporarily into super athletes". All sorts of evil consequences, particularly to the nervous system, were stated to result. From athletic circles in various parts of the world came emphatic, though more temperate, denials regarding evil consequences.

"There were also denials that these pills contributed to the creation of records. Benzedrine, it was pointed out, was administered on a large scale to the fighting services during World War II. The advantages were postponement of sleep, prolongation of the will to carry on, disregard of physical peril and a feeling of well-being. There was an increased capacity for work but not superior quality of the work".

Medical opinion that faith is more productive than pills or a syringe - expressed in Sir Adolphe's claim that a "pep-talk can achieve as much as any pep-pill", is acceptable up to a point. But are athletes, and particularly coaches, tending to abandon the talk in favour of the pill? Such a course may at first seem the lazier and easier way out for all.

But it is agreed that the major danger so far as the sportsmen are concerned is the effect of the pill or the injection on the system in conjunction with extreme physical exertion. When other, hitherto unconsidered, even unpredictable, factors take a hand, the threat to health, even life can be very real. In this respect, those responsible for encouraging athletes to artificial stimulation have a moral responsibility which is not always heeded.