

# The pursuit of excellence

Mr. William R. Reed, Big Ten Commissioner in the U.S.A. presented many important views concerning "The Pursuit of Excellence" in physical education when he spoke in Saskatoon in July, 1962. I feel that what he had to say is of great interest to students of Physical Education, but of greater importance to the students of other faculties who may be interested in intelligently considering the role of sport in education. I have used Mr. Reed's deliverance as the basis for this article and all quotes contained herein are from his speech unless otherwise stated.

We are living in a world of change and ever increasing advances in man's knowledge. To keep pace with this advancement, educators are continually doing reappraisals of our education systems. Without discounting the vital importance of technological training, and development, a certain skepticism must be maintained as to "whether this reappraisal is simply to assist in the race to the moon, or is to serve our people and mankind, to reconcile ourselves to this marvelous new world that technologists are opening to us so that we may live in that world with a sense of security and well being that fulfills the promises of, man's age-old aspirations." Let us hope that it is the latter.

Many people criticize the role of sports in our educational system. They feel that the "vicious overemphasis" on competitive athletics is "seriously destructive to our entire educational structure". With the increased emphasis on excellence, many feel this emphasis on sport is "misdirected effort" and draws from the attaining of excellence in education.

"Now let us get one thing straight." We, as physical educators, "can be and are just as concerned as any others for the upgrading of school and college curricula, and for the elevation of the teaching profession. We are as devoted as any in the pursuit of excellence in our educational system."

A definition of education that is of great importance when considering the pursuit of excellence in education, is the one stated here in the words of Dr. Clarence Dykstra, President of the University of Wisconsin. "Education is the process that makes a mature adult out of a child. It is life itself. Everything that contributes to this process — observation, experience, association with others, the thinking process, formal and informal schooling, games and recreation, and the inspiration that comes from nature, from art, music and from every impact with the universe. Each of these affect different people in varying ways, some more, some less. The more sensitive one is to all these influences, the riper and richer is his education. Education thus becomes a lifelong enrichment of the individual."

Those who attack the role of sports in education are ignoring "The academicians in general look favourably upon the culture of the ancient Athenians. Do they forget that it was they who, to an extent rivalled only by the modern Russians, honored equally the scholar and the athlete."

What of Wellington's judgement that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eaton? What of the spirit of the English at Dunkirk and throughout the horrible days of the Battle of London? "As a result of the discipline of sport, an Englishman will keep struggling when everything his intellect can contribute shows it to be a lost cause."

General Douglas MacArthur has given a summation of the sports role in the American society; "Athletic sport — the game — has become a symbol of our countries best qualities — courage, stamina, co-ordinated efficiency. Many believe in these cynical days of doubt and indecision that through sport we can best keep alive the spirit of vitality and enterprise which has made us great. It is a vital character builder."

Returning to Mr. Reed's text, he continues: It is a vital character builder! Over the years and sneers we have too often heard let us mark that. Let us not forget that as we examine our national purpose. Let us make clear to America why it is that we as people so prize excellence in sports. It is because in sports one is accepted on merit alone, and merit in sports is not only a matter of skill but of character.

"These are the facts! The lessons of sport stress and consequently develop loyalty, fundamental concepts of right and wrong, meaning of self-sacrifice and a realization that adversity is not a personal thing but only something to be overcome."

This type of character is illustrated by such Canadians as Doug Rodgers, Harry Jerome, Russ Jackson and others who do so much for the Canadian character. Athletic sport — the game — should be at the root of that which is best in Canadian character.

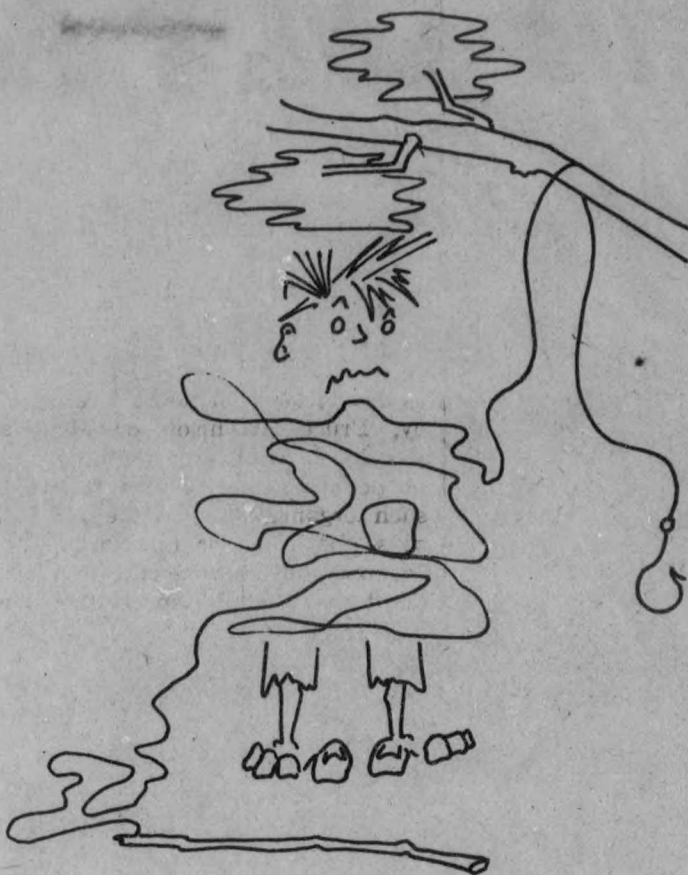
"Indeed I would answer those who decry an alleged over-emphasis on sport in our school systems and society by asking in what other halls are those lessons being taught or taught so well."

Sports provide physical fitness, yes, and our nation needs that. But of equal or greater importance is our mental and spiritual fitness, that is "the toughening of our fibres for this age which is so awesome and so challenging as even to threaten our national existence unless we are completely prepared for it."

"Sports and a love of sports, are truly a part of our pursuit of excellence for they teach us the qualities of spirit that are as vital to our future as the anti-missile."

We, as physical educators, believe in the need of sports in our culture to attain excellence — physically, mentally, and spiritually. We must take this belief to the Canadian public through our educational process in the most excellent way possible that we may reduce our critics to few and increase our excellence of Canadian character to the highest level possible.

## RECREATION



BUT I ENJOY FISHING!

## Cahper - 1965

The Physical Education Department has been chosen to host the 16th Biennial Convention of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Some 400 to 450 delegates from all parts of Canada and the Eastern parts of the United States will convene at U.N.B. from June 21st to 23rd inclusive when this national body holds its convention in the Maritime area for the second time in its history.

The University of New Brunswick was selected as the site of this coming year's Convention because of the tremendous growth in its degree program and because of the contribution which its staff and graduates have made to physical education, athletics, and recreation in all parts of Canada.

Some forty sessions will be held during the three-day convention featuring speakers from Canada and the United States, from universities, provincial, state and federal departments, and from high schools and recreation organizations. Among the speakers who have already indicated that they will be on hand are:

- Dr. Glen Olds, President of Springfield College, Mass.
- Dr. Del Oberteuffer, Ohio State University.
- Miss Bonnie Prudden, New York.
- Mr. Roger Dion, Director of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Ottawa.
- Prof. W. J. L'Heureux, University of Western Ontario.
- Dr. W. D. Smith, University of Alberta.
- Dr. F. J. Hayden, University of Western Ontario.
- Miss Rose Hill, McMaster University.
- Miss Anne Turnbull, Queen's University.
- Miss Toni Proyer, Truro Elementary Schools.
- Miss Dorothy Walker, Dartmouth Schools.
- Miss Michelle Fleury, University of Ottawa.
- Dr. Stewart Davidson, Montreal Protestant School Board.
- Mr. Jack Pearce, Ottawa.
- Mr. Doug Riley, Rosemere, Quebec.

—Mr. Michael Palko, Department of National Health & Welfare, Ottawa.

Physical Education undergraduate students will be asked to assist with this Convention and it is expected that the Undergraduate Society will play a major role in this program which will bring so many outstanding physical educators to the U.N.B. campus.

Dr. J. W. Meagher  
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## EDUCATION

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seems to be thinking along this line in giving special emphasis to trade and technical training. Some general plan and careful forecast is required; the degree to which this can and ought to be done is a matter of dispute.

There are others who approach the problem from the point of view of the individual. They would attempt to identify abilities and direct the interests of students into the kinds of work and activity in which they can succeed; they would let the results fall where they will. These educators believe that natural choice and ability will fill the needs, that in any case there will be much overlap, that predictions of manpower needs are likely to be, at the best, guesses, and that we should not be too concerned about the actual numbers being trained in any area. Give the student thorough training suited to his needs and abilities and he can adjust to the jobs that are available. The primary concern here is with the individual. A thorough job must be done whether we pro-

## To qualify personnel

The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act provides for an allocation of up to \$5,000,000 annually to encourage, promote, and develop fitness and amateur sport in Canada. A total of \$2,000,000 was made available under the Act for the fiscal year 1963-64; and the amount was increased to \$3,000,000 for 1964-65.

The program administered under the Act is divided into three main parts: (1) federal grants made directly to national organizations, for purposes of national interest, or for post-graduate training and research; (2) services provided by the Department of National Health and Welfare; and (3) grants-in-aid to the provinces, to assist in the development of services at the provincial and local level.

Although the program has not yet been in operation long enough to make possible any evaluation of its long term results, there is evidence that it has already been responsible for substantial progress. Aid to the training of coaches is being reflected in considerably improved coaching methods in a number of sports. Substantial contributions have been made to assist Canadian participation in international sports events and in national competitions. Substantial assistance has been given to organizations, such as the Y's concerned with non-competitive fitness activities, in the undertaking of projects which have considerably enlarged and improved programs. Aid given to fitness research, and the enlistment of the services of people with expert knowledge in this field in an advisory capacity, has brought a new dimension, scope and vitality to this fundamentally important aspect of the program.

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vide for specialization or a general education in our secondary institutions. The thinking in the Atlantic area seems to favour the view that the interest of the individual is paramount. Perhaps this is because this area has exported its manpower — trained or untrained.

The Atlantic area has suffered because of relatively scarce natural resources, handicaps of location far from the centres of population, and because of the fiscal and trade policies established by a central government, which has not always been too concerned with its impact on this area. The area has been an exporter of human resources since Confederation. There are many who resent this, and it is hoped that with recent expansion in the mineral and forest industries and with the drive to expand secondary industries, more of our young people will find employment in the area. Regardless of whether this happens or not, it is obvious to us that our educational institutions must meet the demands of modern industry whether at home, in other parts of Canada, or abroad.

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