

PLAY LIFE OF BOYS.

Based on a Canvass of 2,281 Boys (See Appendix 1)
and A Study of Playground Facilities.

The following is a statement of a leading worker with boys: "What in our world we call play is for them (children) the serious business of childhood. Play for them is not a luxury but a necessity, not something they like to do, but something absolutely essential, that they must do if they are to live normal lives." Such a quotation is sufficient to show the importance of carefully superintending and developing the play life of children. It is not only that play makes for health and physical vigor. In the stimulus it gives to the brain cells, in the qualities of initiative, self-control, perseverance, courage, endurance and unselfishness that it develops, particularly when it takes the form of team games, it lays the very foundations of true moral and intellectual greatness.

In the light of such facts how discouraging it is to read the answers made by over two thousand boys to the question asked in the recent Survey, "Where do you play?" If anyone doubts the inadequacy of the present civic provision for the play life of our boys, he has but to glance at such comments as the following: "At home;" "On the street;" "Down town;" "Anywhere;" "Nowhere;" "At neighbors' homes;" and one boy says, "Go to movies mostly."

What is London doing to meet this need? At the present time playground facilities of the city are confined to the Public School grounds and to the Public Parks. The school grounds are available to the pupils only during school hours. Working boys and girls have not been permitted to use the playgrounds because of the noise and damage which might be caused through lack of supervision. The parks at present provide, to some extent, facilities for youthful recreation. There are two baseball diamonds at Queen's Park, one at Thames Park, one at Chelsea Green and two at Springbank. There are two tennis courts at Queen's Park and one at Springbank. Springbank, however, cannot be considered a community centre playground as being so far from the city it only provides for the needs of picnic parties. Skating rinks are maintained during the winter at Victoria, Queen's and Thames Parks and have proved to be most popular. As one of the chief requisites of playgrounds is amplexness, it is felt that the public parks are the proper places.

Is this sufficient? We realize the financial strain of the present time which prevents the expenditure of large sums in securing grounds for playground purposes, but we feel that much larger use could be made of present facilities without any considerable expense. The public parks are suitable for such a purpose and in them supervision of a kind can be provided in the permanent staff of the Parks' Department. Of course, it must be borne in mind that under these conditions the playgrounds would need to be confined within certain limits so as not to disturb the peace or mar the beauty of these parks. In a small, formal park, such as Vic-