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PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS IN CITIES.

(Continued from Page 345.)

The planning of our parks and athletic grounds needs more attention. In some of our newer building developments we are providing that not less than one acre in every ten should be left as an open space for public use. The laws of Alberta and Saskatchewan lay down this standard for new subdivisions.

In the Ottawa Housing schemes facilities are provided for outdoor recreation for the residents, from 12 to 14 per cent of the areas being reserved for open spaces. Much of the land that is usually wasted in unnecessary streets has been set aside for tennic courts and children's playgrounds.

If only 10 per cent of each area were provided for open space, that would be about one acre for every 45 persons, or over ten times as much as the rest of the city of Ottawa. It is even superior to the high standard of Vancouver, taking the city as a whole.

Parks and recreation grounds should be spread about our cities and neither too concentrated in one place nor too far distant from the homes of the people. Perhaps less could be spent on artificial adornment and more in making them useful. One of the best evidences of their utility and popularity is that most cities resist most strongly any attempt to reduce their area or to take them away.

Legislation Needed in Ontario.

In Ontario we need a more comprehensive town planning and development act. The Ontario cities have not adequate powers to prepare schemes covering the development of park areas and suburban lands. The preparation of comprehensive city and town planning schemes is planning and to acquire new areas for parks and playgrounds on a reasonable scale suitable for a healthy population.

Land that is least adaptable for building or agriculture is frequently most suitable for parks and parkways. Often level areas, which are by reason of floods in the spring, badly adapted for building, are excellently suited for athletic fields. The Athletic Union should co-operate with the cities in getting a large power to prepare proper planning and to acquire new areas for parks and playgrounds in advance of development.

We also need national and provincial effort to purchase large forest areas outside of our cities as holiday playgrounds. Chicago is co-operating with the county outside to acquire 30,000 acres of forest lands for this purpose, and has already bought 16,000 acres. The provision of parks and playgrounds, if the land is purchased at reasonable cost, does not add materially to the tax burden of the community. The increased value these open spaces give to adjacent land counter-balances the cost of acquiring them. If the city or town could assess these adjacent lands so as to obtain a contribution to the cost of new parks it would be perfectly equitable for them to do so and would aid materially in the solution of the question of cost.

Moreover, the municipality within which such parks would be situated would derive increased revenue from the added assessment given to the adjacent property, as is proved in the figures quoted in this article. The greatest benefit from the parks will, however, be derived from the increased health and, consequently, greater efficiency of the population. Parks are a better investment than hospitals and asylums, and if we do not spend money on the one we shall be compelled to spend it on the other in greater degree than is needed if we exercise proper judgment and foresight.

Cost of Park Areas.

There are many cases where park areas, when bought in advance of development do not cost more than \$100 to \$1,000 per acre. At Ruislip, in the vicinity of London, England, a park area adjoining a town fifteen miles from Charing Cross was bought for \$350 per acre in 1913, and at Chicago the forest reservations were being bought at from \$150 to \$1,000 per acre. The average cost of the Vancouver parks (other than Stanley park) was over \$15,000 an acre, and, in the case of Woodland playgrounds, the cost was \$43,203 an acre. If Vancouver had set aside its open spaces well in advance of development it might have bought 580 acres at the same price or less than the 58 acres it has purchased for \$905,456.

Where open spaces are obtained in advance of development owners of land are often willing to give them free of