



The Present System of University Athletics Fosters Only a "Spectator Interest" Among the Majority of Students; Which May be Good for their Lungs, but Contributes Little to Body Building.

University Neglect of Physical Training

Being a Criticism of the System of Athletics in Our Colleges

By DONALD B. SINCLAIR

THE other day an important announcement emanated from the Registrar's office at Queen's University, Kingston. It stated that the Scotch college down at the east end of Lake Ontario was considering the advisability of introducing physical education into the curriculum of studies. In all probability, the incoming freshmen of 1912 shall find that they shall require to take physical training as a regular part of their course in the same way as Latin, French or economics.

Educationists, in Canada, who have outgrown narrow prejudices against new ideas in education, are watching with interest the proposal to establish physical culture as an academic study at Queen's. The Kingston institution threatens to break new ground in Canada; for if Queen's resolves upon establishing compulsory physical training it will be the first university in Canada to have done so.

In the matter of providing for the physical welfare of their students, Canadian universities are fifteen years behind the times. This may seem a surprising statement to readers of the sporting pages in this country who follow in the autumn with intense interest the gridiron struggles of football-gladiators from Varsity, Queen's and Old McGill. It is true that Canadian college men and women go in for athletics. In the year just closed at the University of Toronto, 1,190 students were engaged in some kind of organized sport. The 15 rugby teams, 16 soccer teams, 17 hockey teams, and 16 basket-ball teams, at that one university would appear proof enough of attachment on the part of students to athletics. But on closer examination, do these figures attest that the University of Toronto is very much concerned whether a student who passes four years within its walls, receives attention to his body? There are 4,000 students registered at Toronto. One-fourth of these participated in athletics under university auspices.

What of the three thousand students last session who did not enter the gymnasium, nor play any game? They did not experience the benefits of physical training because the Canadian university has not as yet reached that stage when it points out to the freshman the grave importance of caring for his body and compels him to do so.

There is no faculty of physical education at Toronto, Queen's or McGill. Higher education in Canada is lop-sided. The equipment and discipline of the Canadian colleges are utilized almost entirely for the development of mental qualities among the students to the neglect of their bodies. The exalted place which gymnastics held in the Platonic ideal of education has far been departed from by our universities. The student, who receives any physical advantage from his university course, does so in spite of, rather than because of, the college authorities. The university helps him as little as possible. It provides a gymnasium and campus and considers its duty done. The student is sometimes told that it is advisable that he should use these facilities; but is under no obligation to do so. The result is, that seventy-five per cent. of the students of our universities never go near the college gymnasium.

Dr. Barton, appointed by the University of Toronto to oversee athletics, remarked to the writer that it was his observation that the very students who need physical training most—the narrow-

chested, sallow-faced, round-shouldered "pluggers," and the cigarette-smoking idlers, pass the gymnasium by as they leave the university at the close of the day. It was the more physically fit students who were attending gymnasium classes and turning out for the teams.

This indicates, that under the present system, the average student is not convinced of the necessity of attaining physical efficiency. Athletics hold a wrong place in his eyes, and in Canadian university government. Gymnastics, football, or hockey are regarded too much for their recreative and amusement value. The student dons Rugby togs, or a gym. suit, because he enjoys football and clubs. If he does not enthuse over them, he considers that he owes no duty to himself to chase the pigskin or perform revolutions with the sticks. The professors do not teach that athletics may have educative value; that the body may be perfected by constant and scientific attention to exercises in the same way as the mind is trained by assiduous, systematic application to Greek verbs or the calculus.

Our college authorities evidently do not view the body as being upon the same high plane as the mind. In this attitude, they are retrogressive. Across the line in such institutions as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia and Dartmouth, for years they have had compulsory physical training. No student in these great colleges may graduate until, during at least the first two years of his course, he has done prescribed exercises under the guidance of an instructor, and satisfied that official of his physical capabilities. Compulsory physical education means that training for the body is an essential part of the college course just as history or physics. The student must attend gymnasium classes and prove to his teachers that he possesses equal dexterity with rings, bars and clubs as with test tubes and Cicero's orations. He must obtain "term credits" as in other subjects. The physical department is organized like any other faculty. The man at the head has the same standing as the Professor of Greek. He is styled "Professor of Physical Education." He sits on the college councils. This professor is an expert in his line. The American universities are logical enough to realize that his work is fully as vital to the culture of the youth under their care as that of those professors whose business it is to develop the mental processes of students.

Every student entering the above colleges must submit to a medical examination by the physician of the physical department. His ancestral history is gone into. What may be weakening constitutional traits are noted. His defects of arm, chest and weight are set down on a chart. His physical habits are discovered. Then, after the student has been thoroughly examined by the medical man, there is outlined for him a course of exercises suitable to his needs and strength. He is handed over to the physical instructor, and compelled regularly to go through exercises. If he wants to play Rugby, or devote himself for a time to some special branch of sport for the glory of his university, and is considered in shape to undertake this, he may be excused for a period from gymnasium work. But, just as soon as the season for his special sport closes, he must resume his work with the bars, clubs and rings in the gymnasium.

Compulsory physical education, as an academic

subject, means that the university which adopts it recognizes the educative worth of athletics. Education is largely discipline. Without discipline it is worthless. It is open to much doubt how much permanent value can result from the system of athletics in vogue at our Canadian colleges, where undergraduates enter into a strenuous period of training for the arduous football season in the autumn, and then are permitted to lapse into a state of physical torpor and sloth for the balance of the year. Compulsory physical education insists that all students shall have bodily exercise. Few college men will learn Latin if they can dodge it. But the regulations keep their noses down to it. How can a university expect a man to regularly attend gymnasium classes unless it marks on his timetable that he must do so? Only the authoritative voice of the Faculty will bring into the gymnasium the thousands of students who crowd the grandstand and prefer to watch for their amusement others take physical training.

The history of Canada for the next thirty years will be the battle of civilization adapting the wilderness. That is a struggle requiring men of big bodies as well as big brains for its leadership. The purpose of the university is to produce leaders. The university should be the first agent in the community for the spread of enlightenment. It cannot close its eyes to the needs of the community and maintain its position. Universities and schools on this continent have abandoned their prejudices and maintained that the development of muscle is as proper and essential a function of the university as the cultivation of gray matter. Canada must not lag behind.

High Cost of Living.

(Charlottetown Guardian.)

Commenting on the interview with Professor Shortt, which appeared in the CANADIAN COURIER of July 6th, the *Charlottetown Guardian* says:

Mr. Patterson, still under the inspiration of his mentor, Adam Shortt, elucidates this idea thus: "For a hundred years the producers of the world have been aiming at shorter hours of labour and longer hours of ease, as well as a higher standard of food, dress and housing."

This also is true. The producers of the world are insisting upon a legitimate share of what they produce. What neither Mr. Patterson nor Mr. Shortt has commented upon is that the capitalists behind the producers also insist upon their full profits, regardless of the fact that the shorter hours and the higher standard of food, dress and housing of the labourers has taken a slice off. The capitalist figures many things into his profits which are not reckoned upon in the profits of the actual producer. The winter in Egypt, the tour through Europe, added to the "hours of ease, the higher standard of food, dress and housing" in his case are counted among the legitimate profits. These must also be taken into account when we reckon upon the increased cost of living and it will require even a greater authority than Adam Shortt to convince the world that the actual producer, the labourer, is not as justly entitled to his slice of the profits as is the man for whom he labours.

The higher cost of living is unquestionably due to the larger and the multiplied profits sliced off the product on its way from the producer to the consumer.

Rural Education.

(Quebec Chronicle.)

The Canadian Courier utters no unmistakable note, however true or otherwise it may be in its statements, about our schools and provincial school systems. "The rural schools of Canada are the worst schools on the continent." Nothing could be more strongly put than that. Unless it be when The Courier claims that these same rural schools "are manned by men and women who have no knowledge of rural life or the needs of those who engage in agriculture."

What About the Sikh?

(Victoria Colonist.)

The Canadian Courier raised a very interesting question. Commenting upon Mr. Borden's visit to England and his intention to discuss the naturalization question, The Mail and Empire expressed itself favourable to a plan whereby each Dominion "might be competent to give a certificate of empire citizenship to all its naturalized people." This idea will be very generally accepted throughout Canada; but The Courier asks how this will apply to the Sikhs now in this country. Of course it may be answered that these are not naturalized British subjects, but derive their "empire citizenship," if they have it, by birth. But we do not see that this answers our contemporary's question, which is a decidedly awkward one. As we understand the matter, a Sikh can vote in the United Kingdom if he has the necessary qualifications.