

# Conservation

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## After the Playground, What?

**A Substitute May be Provided  
in the Municipal Open-Air  
Skating Rink**

Many cities in Canada have instituted the public playgrounds; many more might with advantage do so. There is also a special need for enlarging the scope of the present undertakings. The season for the public playground, as now adopted, is practically at an end. What is to take its place? The school-yard affords a recreation ground only during school hours, after which the children have no claim to its use.

The schools represent a public investment, and, consequently, should be available for public use whenever such use does not interfere with their primary purpose. They might well be utilized for an extension of the playground movement. In many of them space could no doubt be made available for installing much of the playground, as well as other equipment, for indoor gymnasiums for the children.

A further extension of the playground movement is found in the public skating rink. In every municipality there are vacant lots and other open spaces, which, at very little expense, could be converted into skating rinks.

Healthful exercise is necessary for child life, and when to this is added the advantage of keeping the children off the streets and out of danger, the public skating rink would surely be a sound investment. It would continue, in a measure, the excellent work of the playgrounds associations.

Insurance does not replace burned property. It is merely a system whereby the misfortune or carelessness of one becomes a tax on all in the form of insurance premiums.

"Air, light, highways, and water are the primary conditions of civilization. It is the interest of all that every citizen should have as much of these as he wants."  
—Frederick Harrison.

## Canada's Handicap

**Her Industries Hampered by Heavy Charges to  
Provide for Fire Losses**

The direct fire loss of Canada for the past five years has averaged \$23,722,246 per year, and of this amount at least seventy-five per cent is the immediate result of personal carelessness.

To this vast sum must be added the cost of equipment and up-keep of fire departments, a proportion of the cost and expense of waterworks systems, and the money paid as premiums to insurance companies in excess of the amount returned to the policy-holders as indemnity for losses.

This latter charge amounted, for the five years 1910-14, to \$52,918,061.

The above charges total approximately forty-five million dollars per annum, or a tax of over six dollars on every man, woman and child in Canada.

Canada's census returns give an average of five members to a family, with a consequent average family assessment of thirty dollars to cover the fire charge.

Canada's fire loss per capita is at least five times greater than that of any European country. The Canadian employer, in competing for business in the world's markets, must meet, among others, the additional charge for fire loss, fire protection and fire insurance, before he can compete with his European competitors on an even basis.

Canadians must unite to take effective measures to reduce this tax. Business men and employees, alike dependent upon Canadian industry, should take precautions against the enormous fire loss lest, through this extra cost of production, their industries be unable to meet foreign competition and to furnish employment for their capital and labour.

## Sturgeon Fishery

**Depletion of the St. John River and  
other Fishing Grounds Almost  
Complete**

The decline of the sturgeon fishery of New Brunswick furnishes an extreme example of the manner in which this fishery throughout the Dominion has been steadily but surely depleted.

Thirty-five years ago the St. John river contained an immensely productive sturgeon fishery, which, prior to 1880, was utilized because Canadian fishermen were not aware of the real value of the sturgeon. When, however, its commercial value became known, mainly through the caviar merchants in New York city, no time was lost in exploiting the fishery to the maximum.

In the absence of effective restrictions, the supply of sturgeon in the St. John river was rapidly exhausted. In the two years 1880 and 1881, the catch in New Brunswick exceeded the total output of the province for the following thirty-two years. In

the five-year period 1880 to 1884 the average catch exceeded 300,000 pounds, while during the last five-year period for which statistics are available, 1909 to 1913, it was less than 14,000 pounds. What is true of the St. John river is true in a lesser degree of practically all sturgeon fisheries in Canada.

During the five years, 1894 to 1898, the Dominion, as a whole, produced an annual output of more than two and a half million pounds of sturgeon. For the years 1909 to 1913 the average annual catch had fallen to considerably less than one million pounds.

How to revive the sturgeon fishery is a difficult problem. Artificial culture has never proven a success on this continent. The American sturgeon fishery is probably in an even more depleted condition than that of Canada, and a total prohibition of sturgeon has been suggested for the only solution. Such a drastic measure should be a last resort, but would surely be preferable to the complete extinction of a species so valuable, commercially, as the sturgeon.

## Electric Cooking Popular

**The Better, Cleaner and more  
Sanitary Way of Cooking  
Making Headway**

The increasing popularity of electric cooking is well evidenced by the attention which is being given to this subject in the press. That it is a better, cleaner and more sanitary way of cooking was never questioned. The only objection has been the high cost in comparison with coal, gas or other fuels. Formerly the cost of both the electric range, or oven, and the current were practically prohibitive. Two or three years ago the prices of electric energy in most Canadian centres were so reduced that electric cooking became cheaper than the older methods. This has had the effect of stimulating the manufacture of cheaper electric cooking devices, as it became evident that a much larger field was being opened and an enormous demand could not fail to follow. Thus, the second objection to electric cooking is a good electric range costs very little more than a gas range.

An important point, often disregarded when the saving by electric cooking is compared, is the excessive loss in meat shrinkage by the older methods. For instance it is not generally realized that an eight pound roast of beef weighs only five and a half pounds after roasting by gas, while, if cooked by electricity, only three-quarters of a pound is lost. With other meats and different sizes of roasts similar results obtain.

Another great advantage of electric cooking is the precise manner in which it can be accomplished. The results of cooking experiments in electric ovens indicate that it is possible to reduce the art of cooking with electricity to an exact science. If definite rules of time and temperature were formulated for cooking each article of food, the inexperienced housewife could obtain uniformly good results with the expenditure of a minimum of attention and fuel.

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