

## Summer Camps for Boys

BY MR. J. A. IRVINE

**A** FEW years ago very little was done for the boys in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association. To-day one of the great problems, and one that is engaging the thought and attention of many minds, is the Boy and what to do for him, and how to help him to a higher and a better life. During the past ten or twelve years I have been engaged, to some extent, in work for boys and have found that a camp held for them during the summer months is of great value and assistance in many ways. It not only benefits the boy, but helps the worker, whether he be a Sunday school teacher or Young Men's Christian Association man, to get a clearer insight into boy life and character, and to know the boy as he is in every day and home life. In camping out the worker comes in contact with the boy as in no other way, living, sleeping, eating and playing with him. It is a great opportunity to get close to him, and a grand place to get a personal hold over him—friendships formed in camp last a lifetime. The vacation period of a boy's life is a time of special temptation, and the camp forms an exceptional opportunity for him to be guided along paths that are straight.

### MARITIME BOYS' CAMP.

In 1892 Mr. E. M. Robinson, of St. Stephen, N.B. (now of the International Y.M.C.A. Committee, New York), having

This is a position where no amount of ability can take the place of love for boys, without which any man is unfit for service. It is planned to have, at least, one trustworthy man for every five or six boys, and a man whose heart and brain are ever busy hunting out some scheme to help the boys have a better time than they ever had before.

Very few rules are needed, the fewer the better; the boys are put on their honor, and as a general rule do what is right. One thing, however, is insisted on; no one is allowed to enter the water for bathing or swimming except in the presence and with the consent of the leader.

The only real hard work the boys indulge in is the work of running after some kind of a ball. It may be basket ball, football, cricket or tennis or something else—it makes little difference to the boys, as long as they have some way of working off their surplus energy. Games and sports of various kinds are indulged in, for there is always crowd enough to play any game that was ever invented, and yet never so large a number that the smallest boy would be shut out from his equal share with the rest in any fun that is going on.

It is always expected to have a competent physical director at each camp to see that nothing is overdone and also an experienced physician to relieve the cares of those in charge.

The boys have a camp paper, and this affords not only amusement, but profit as well. Editors and sub-editors are chosen, and they select their staff of contributors. The paper is published each day, and is read after dinner by one of the boys. After camp it is printed and distributed and serves as a reminder during the winter of the jokes and fun during the outing.

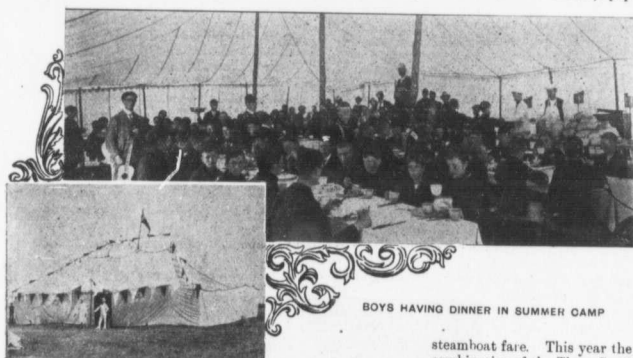
The culinary department is in charge of a competent cook who sees that good substantial food, and lots of it, is ready at the appointed hour for meals.

The cost is cut down as fine as possible. Each one pays \$7.50 for two weeks—this does not include railway or

steamboat fare. This year the committee are planning on a combination of the Three Sections in one large camp, and will probably hold a Conference and Institute on Boys' Work at the same time. The Camp will be situated at Big Cove, Sutherland's River, in the county of Pictou, N.S., which is a magnificent camping ground. It is situated on a farm of nearly one hundred acres. On one side is Big Cove, a large body of salt water, and on the other side, within a stone's throw, is Sutherland's River running inland for several miles, affording lots of bathing and boating. There is also a large field for games, etc.

In the evening the boys gather in one of the large tents and listen to some interesting lecture, magic lantern entertainment, or concert, in which the camper takes part. Often the Camp Doctor will give talks on "First aid to the injured," "What to do in case of accident," etc. Other evenings they gather on the hillside or around the camp-fire on the beach, with their backs to some friendly log and their feet to the cheery blaze, and talk together about future plans, crack jokes and sing songs. Then the best hour of all the day dawns naturally to nobler things, and they lift up their hearts in gratitude to Him whose watchful care has kept them from all harm, and with simplest words speak of all His goodness, while swelling songs of praise are heard on every hand. Nearly all the boys declare this hour to be one of the best features of the camp.

The Maritime Boys' Camp is an organization which has during the past few years been a great help to the boys of the Provinces. Every one who has ever had the privilege of



BOYS HAVING DINNER IN SUMMER CAMP

had a large experience in camp life realized the benefit of such outings and resolved to give the boys of the Y.M.C.A. there a chance to participate in the pleasures of camp, and arranged for an outing at Campobello, N.B. About thirty boys took advantage of the offer. So great was the enjoyment and profit in body, mind and spirit, to those who attended that the leader decided to extend the influence of the camp, and asked the Maritime Y.M.C.A. to organize a committee to carry on the work, and the next year boys from various parts of the three provinces were invited to attend. The camp continued to grow in popularity and in numbers. In 1897 two encampments were planned for, one in New Brunswick and the other in Nova Scotia. In 1900 it was again found advisable to enlarge another section, for Cape Breton was added. Since the inception of the organization nearly 1,500 boys have been in touch with the Camp Leaders, many were led to know Christ, and are rejoicing in a Saviour, found for the first time at the Maritime Boys' Camp. The camps have been held at different places, sometimes we go by train, sometimes by steamer, and sometimes by vessel.

The first night spent at camp is usually a very novel and interesting one, particularly to the boy who has never been there before. For a time sleep is out of the question—there is much to be talked over, friendships made, and plans laid for the coming days.

The Maritime Committee have had reason to rejoice in the young men who have so nobly assisted in going as leaders.