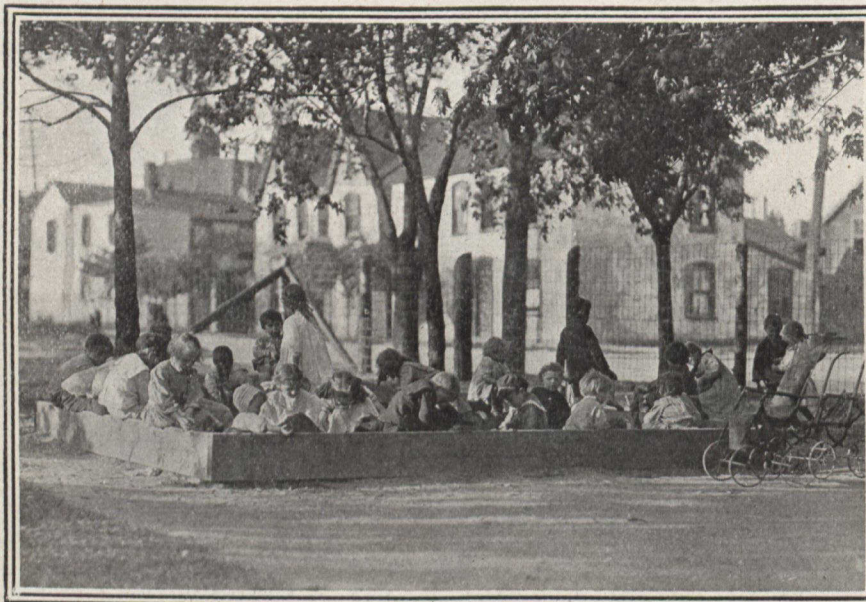




"Shooting the Chutes," at the New Municipal Playground, Toronto. This popular amusement is seldom without a line-in-waiting.



"A Boxful of Babies," Building Castles in the Sand



The Horizontal Bar for Boys is a great aid to physical development.

## A PARADISE FOR CHILDREN

*What the Establishment of Public Playgrounds in the Larger Cities means to the Children of Canada*

THERE was a time in the history of our Canadian cities when a vacant lot lurked just around the corner from the home of almost every small boy, and the matter of having the school team meet the "Luckies" in old Jonse's field for the Saturday afternoon game, was an easily arranged one indeed. Lately, however, these open places have become few and far between, and Bobby and Johnny and the whole team must take an hour's run on the street car to reach the city limits and unobstructed space before a ball game may be played.

The woods, too, where the girls could go in the summer time to pick the wild flowers and paddle in the brook, have slipped farther and farther away until they have passed completely out of reach. Rapid increase of population and vast building operations have done the deed.

The public park, with its restricting sign "Keep Off the Grass" confining one to the narrow gravel paths, and the city street, busy with heavy waggons, dashing motor cars, and countless dangers at every hand, are the only spots which remain to the children of our great communities wherein they may play. The necessity of some provision being made for them has recently become keenly apparent, and a movement to establish public playgrounds in our larger cities has lately been gaining force throughout the Dominion.

On the 28th of May, 1908, a meeting was called in the City Hall, Toronto, by Mr. J. J. Kelso, Provincial Superintendent of Neglected Children, to establish a playground association, and as a result

of the energy and perseverance displayed by Mr. Kelso and his co-workers in the enterprise, there exists in Toronto to-day eight supervised and fully equipped playgrounds, with an average attendance of from one-hundred and fifty to three hundred children each day.

The provision of these grounds has found great favour with the children themselves, and no wonder that Bobby and Johnny and Little Mary Ann, who all their lives had been accustomed to an atmosphere of smoke and griminess, should open their eyes as well as their mouths when they first entered the playground and saw what had been prepared for them. Swings there were, trapeze and flying-rings for the boys, sand boxes for the little ones, and most beautiful of all, a summer toboggan where they might "shoot the chutes" to their hearts' content. And everything free. That is the point that "hits" with the children.

The big blue-coated policemen, too, have their ideas on the subject. If you were to talk to one whose duty takes him near one of these gardens of play, he would tell you that the public playground is the finest thing on earth. "Why," he would say, "there is never a child to be seen on the streets, except those that are coming from or going to the playground itself."

As for the mothers, it did not take them long to realise the responsibility that had been lifted from their shoulders, and to feel that while their children were in the playgrounds and under the care of the supervisor in charge, they were satisfying their natural longing for play and exercise, and

at the same time having instilled into them a sense of fairness and honesty, and the beauty of a harmonious association with others of their kind. In many instances the grounds have become a meeting place for these women, who come often of an afternoon bringing the younger children with them, and spend a pleasant hour with one another while the little ones play.

At the Toronto Industrial Exhibition this year there is to be displayed a "Model Playground," a facsimile of which the association hopes will some day be established within five minutes' walk of every little citizen of Toronto. It is believed that an exhibit of this kind will awaken a great deal of interest, and open the eyes of the general public to the wonderful work which is going on in this connection.

Mr. C. A. B. Brown, who for some years has been a member of the Public School Board, is President of the Association, and an active worker in the children's cause. As a mark of tribute to his loyalty and support a school which is under erection in the northern part of the city is to be called after him, and it is understood that Mr. Brown has generously offered to supply the equipment for a playground in connection with the institution bearing his name.

Montreal, Winnipeg and Ottawa are also agitating for the establishment of these breathing spaces throughout their cities, and so favourable a welcome has the idea received generally that the men and women who have undertaken the promotion of the enterprise are greatly encouraged in their work. No doubt in time the movement will be adopted by every city throughout the Dominion. In the larger ones at any rate, it has found so firm a foothold that it may be safe to state that the public playgrounds are with us to stay.