

PLAYGROUNDS

— ONE OF —

CANADA'S GREAT NEEDS



A CALL TO SERVICE FOR THE
CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE

1914
(3)



*A Plea for
Recreation and Playgrounds*

By J. J. KELSO, Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children
of Ontario, Parliament Buildings, Toronto

94624



To Promote Recreation.

BY means of play and wholesome recreation the spirit of youth is perpetuated and the routine of daily life is brightened with the quality of joyous exhilaration. In this way the sum total of human happiness may be vastly increased.

Countless generations of children will yet inhabit this great Dominion, and if our statesmen and philanthropists consider for a moment the claims of posterity, and wish to be regarded as of blessed memory they will advocate and carry out a more generous and far-visioned playground policy in the towns and villages now springing up on every hand, and destined in the years to come to expand into great cities, with teeming multitudes of boys and girls needing play facilities.

There is not a city or town that is at present doing anything like its full duty in this respect.

Men's thoughts have been occupied with other things, and they have to be frequently reminded that there are interests in life beside material prosperity, that health and happiness are as worthy of serious thought as any other policy of national development.

ORGANIZATION.

The best results can usually be obtained by organizing a Playgrounds Association. A comparatively small number of our large cities have done anything in this direction, and there is a big field here for enthusiastic workers. The plan of procedure is somewhat as follows: Get up a petition headed like this:

PLAYGROUNDS ASSOCIATION.

We, the undersigned, heartily approve of the organization of a playgrounds association, to secure greater recognition and appreciation of play activities, and in the event of the association being formed we pledge our support:

NAME	ADDRESS.
JAMES SMITH,	83½ King Street.
ARTHUR THOMPSON.	Chamber of Commerce.

Forty or fifty influential and representative signatures will ensure the success of the movement.

The next step would be to request the mayor or president of the Board of Trade to call a public meeting, at which three or four citizens would be prepared to advocate and explain the proposed action.

A resolution could then be submitted along these lines:

RESOLVED, that this public meeting of citizens held on this 20th day of January, 1915, do hereby unanimously decide to proceed with the organization of a playgrounds association;

That the name of the said association be— — — — —

That in general its object shall be TO PROMOTE HEALTHFUL RECREATION.

That the board of management consist of a president, two vice-presidents, a treasurer, a secretary, and a council composed of ten ladies and ten gentlemen, with power to appoint such other officials as they may deem expedient.

And that the following be now elected as the first board of management:

President—
Etc.

A constitution and working by-laws can easily be adopted from the rules in use by other benevolent organizations. (See page 21.)

OFFICERS SHOULD BE ENTHUSIASTIC.

People should be selected for office who are really interested and willing to exert themselves to make the movement a success. Too often men are elected to office in such societies because of their prominence, and without any expectation that they will be more than figureheads. Enthusiasm can only be sustained by frequent meetings and zealous, active service.



OFF FOR A COUNTRY VACATION.

MAKE A CAREFUL SURVEY.

Probably the first step would be to have a careful survey made of the existing playground facilities, and aim to have these supplemented by the securing of more grounds, and the better equipment and supervision of the playgrounds in use. It is a sad reflection that there are in every town splendid natural parks, groves, streams, hillsides and play spaces that are privately owned when they should belong to the whole people and be the happy meeting-place of hundreds of children. Through the force of public opinion and judicious negotiations carried on by an association, some of these beauty spots could be secured for public use, and what higher service could be rendered the community than this?

THINGS YOU CAN DO.

Then, too, very little expense is involved in the creation of free skating rinks, toboggan slides, bathing and swimming ponds on a river or lakeside, the conversion of unused public property into a neighborhood park or playground, the planting of trees and flowers, the organization of free bowling and tennis clubs, play festivals, open-air band concerts, social centres in schools, armories and other public buildings, encouraging the study of natural history, the importation of song birds, and, in short, giving full expression to the innate love of the beautiful, the aesthetic, the artistic. Life has a constant tendency to become prosaic and commonplace; the playgrounds association can introduce a hundred counteracting influences, and be of untold benefit to the community. Even the purchase and judicious distribution of flowering shrubs and vines would change the whole appearance of a dull neighborhood and give pleasure and inspiration to thousands.

THEREFORE, by all means, get a playgrounds association started, and take up some of these much-needed improvements.



STARTING ON LIFE'S VOYAGE.

NOTES.

FOLLOWING will be found some random thoughts and suggestions intended for the help and encouragement of playground workers. Use these ideas freely, in schools, pulpits and press, and, as a result, may playgrounds, properly equipped, and supervised by genuine child-lovers spring up everywhere, diffusing health and joyousness among all the young people of our country!



CHILDREN LOVE TO WATCH THINGS GROW.

The revival of folk-dancing is one of the beneficial results of the playground movement.

No better way of doing good than to buy and present to your home town a few acres of land to be used forever as a playground.

A supervised playground was opened in a certain neighborhood where juvenile crime had been prevalent. In a week or two this evil had practically disappeared. Idleness leads to wrongdoing. Busily and pleasantly occupied, and with leaders interested in their welfare, the boys will usually be found responsive to good influences.

We are not here to work all day,
But need a little time to play.

Children will always desert the playground that is not under the constant direction of enthusiastic leaders. Vide, the average schoolyard after hours. They want the excitement and variety of action—the quick succession of interesting events.

Not infrequently one sees a fine tract of public ground used only as a dumping place for rubbish, while a short distance off hundreds of children are loitering on busy streets and hanging about the doors of motion-picture theatres.

A morbid, nervous condition in a child is deplorable. Too often this results from a sedentary indoor life, and the forming of wrongful habits, through ignorance. The remedy, or better still, the preventative, is the active open-air life, under the guidance of a play leader.

Some day the qualified and trained supervisor of play will be the popular children's doctor. His prescription will be made up of fresh air, sunshine, activity and laughter. Old-fashioned physic will then be thrown to the dogs (poor dogs! why should they be punished thus?).

Proper organization of social effort would eliminate much of the misery and expense involved in charity work. Thoroughness is needed in locating and attacking the causes of distress.

Any wealthy person who wishes to leave behind him an honored name should donate a playground to his town or city.

Why are people sick? Ignorance of nature's laws, unsanitary methods of living, overheated rooms, lack of fresh air, poorly arranged work rooms and factories, poisonous gases and dust, foul air, exclusion of sunlight—sure forerunners of consumption.

Look around and pick out a good spot for a playground. Then organize an agitation for its purchase.



DOES YOUR MEMORY GO BACK THIS FAR?

With a good play-leader the smallest space may be turned into a children's paradise.

Every city should provide its young people with free grounds for football, baseball, cricket, bowling and tennis. Reward comes back in a citizenship possessed of better health and greater efficiency.

“ Evil communications corrupt good manners.” The unregulated playground offers “ the gang ” a convenient meeting-place for lawless plotting. The enthusiasm for clean sport evoked by the supervisor turns the gang spirit into useful channels.

Not repression or suppression, but expression, is the thought that fits in here.

To persuade is better than to compel.

We conquer by loving.

Twenty-five boys used to gather in a vacant lot to play. One day thirty cents worth of window glass was broken, the police were notified, the lads were chased off and now there is the ominous sign on the fence, “ Trespassers will be prosecuted.”

A citizen one day noticed two little fellows with skates hanging on their arm looking wistfully through a crack in the fence at the other fellows having a good time. They didn't have the requisite fifteen cents. The result—over thirty free skating rinks in Toronto to-day! Glory be!

Happy children at play saves a city from falling into the abyss of sordid selfishness and pessimism.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of happy faces and grassy places—naturally the former is the result of the latter.

The old-fashioned church used to be surrounded by a graveyard. Why should not the modern church be surrounded by a playground? This would be a good way of interpreting and proclaiming the church's message.

You who have a summer-house in Muskoka—or some other favored spot—remember the thousands of children who live in the same crowded neighborhood all the year round. Do something for them.

Put your money into a movement that crowds sunshine and happiness into the lives of boys and girls. A playground once secured, can never be diverted from its original purpose.

The best type of citizen can be evolved only from the hearty, robust child, who has had a full and well-rounded youth, spent in cheerful and clean moral environment.



BOYS PLEASANTLY EMPLOYED.

Physical training, properly regulated, stimulates the intellect, and arouses the moral qualities of courage, loyalty, self-reliance and initiative. It helps to fit the individual for the primary duties of life—those of a good citizen.

The playground movement leads in the fight against tuberculosis. It makes the child a lover of fresh air and the outdoor life, teaches chest expansion, and spreads the knowledge of hygienic principles.

The playground movement adds healthfulness, hopefulness, vivacity and buoyancy to the childlife of our populous centres.

Directing children's play opens up a new and interesting vocation for young women.

A fifty-foot lot with a sand pile and a few swings would be a big relief to tired mothers in a congested neighborhood.

Dancing is one of the most healthy and joyous of exercises. Therefore it should be under the supervision of the community, and not left in the control of unprincipled people.

A social centre stands for sympathetic neighborliness and intelligent helpfulness.

An up-to-date school should have an assembly hall, a gymnasium and swimming tank, manual and domestic training, special classes for foreign and backward children; evening classes for working children, choral classes, entertainments for parents, boys' clubs and literary societies. A social leader and the social spirit.

Children like to be usefully employed, and boys can readily be taught carpentering, plumbing and other industries as part of their play life.

Cicero recognized the dependence of the mind upon the body, and the relation of exercise to both, when he said, "It is exercise alone which supports the spirits and keeps the mind in vigor."

In a city government there is nothing that gives more satisfaction to the public and joy to the children than broadly-conceived playgrounds, rinks and toboggan slides.

If the body is weakened by disease or by inactivity the intellectual powers become enfeebled and the morals are apt to degenerate.

No one would think of turning a public building over to a mob. There must be some one in charge. A director on the playground is equally essential. Unless held in restraint, the strong oppress the weak, and mob rule prevails.

Why not substitute vines, flowers and shrubs for ash heaps, bill boards, rubbish and other things offensive to sight and smell?



CHILDREN'S FRESH AIR FUND PARTY.

Physical training, under a capable leader, and with the proper diet, will do more to build up and reform delinquent youths than any amount of moral or mental instruction. Nearly all crime is due to physical deterioration.

Provide for the children of to-day a pleasant, happy and healthy childhood, and thus materially reduce crime, misery and physical deterioration.

Let children get a sane mind in a sound body and clean heart in a clean body.

Small children wearing glasses are getting to be a common sight in this country. A traveller in Germany writes that at a children's picnic, where twelve hundred boys and girls were assembled, only two wore glasses. This he attributed to the open-air play life.

The child must have room, means and opportunity to play, or its physical being suffers and its mental faculties are correspondingly affected. As well deny air and space to the growing plant as deny the same advantages, together with active bodily exercise, to growing boys and girls.

Those who have the fewest natural advantages are those upon whom the loss of a place in which to play bears most heavily.

The larger our cities become, the more and more does the danger to the cities' children increase. The vacant lots get gradually occupied, the "commons" disappear, and the children are driven into the streets.

Boys' Clubs organized by the right people and with the right ideals can do much for future citizenship. They hold the youth at a time when the natural tendency would be toward wildness and excess. Boys must have companionship and play.

Apart from the beautiful environment which ample playgrounds afford, will not our children and those of our foreign-born citizens best learn to work together in concord, if first they have learned to play together in peace?

In addition to the many corners of public parks that could be turned to good account, there are also a large number of gardens and vacant lots whose owners would cheerfully assist if approached in the right spirit. Thousands of children are now debarred from harmless outdoor pleasures because of a three-foot fence and a locked gate on some unused property.

There should be a play specialist appointed in every large city to put intelligence and enthusiasm into the movement for helping young people to secure proper outdoor enjoyment.

A boy's character is formed as much on the playground as in the school-room, perhaps even more so, for in amusements his individuality comes out more strongly.



SAVE THE SHORES FOR THE CHILDREN.

School buildings should be opened more extensively to the people for social centres.

The hearts of children go out in grateful affection to those who show a willingness to participate in their amusements, and through directed, well-organized play they can often learn more than in the classroom.

The success or failure of the playground movement depends not so much on the size of the grounds or their equipment as the spirit that animates the management. Just as there is energy and enthusiasm on the part of the youthful participants, so also must there be a kindred spirit in the supervision and direction. While it is important for the Parks Commission to provide the grounds and fit them for their purpose, it is equally necessary to have supervisors to encourage and guide the children and growing youth in their amusements.

Orphanage Boards can do a good work both for the children and the community by providing equipped and supervised playgrounds.

The supervised playgrounds already established have fully demonstrated that youthful happiness can be easily doubled by a small expenditure for swings, slides, etc., and the appointment of a supervisor who can enter into the spirit of the delightful games that from disuse have almost passed out of existence.

Play is at present almost the only method of physical development for city children, and we must provide facilities for it if we would have the children strong and law-abiding.



VALUE OF PLAY.

Play is essential to proper physical development, and moral growth depends to a large extent on free and healthy exercise. It is the right of childhood and it is only reasonable to ask that all the necessary facilities should be provided. To be beneficial it should be wisely encouraged and directed and the undesirable elements eliminated. There should be swings,



EXERCISE DISPELS HEADACHES.

see-saws, sand piles, wading pools and gymnasia in addition to grounds for baseball, cricket, football and tennis. These playgrounds should be numerous enough to be within easy reach of every city child, and amateur athletics should be given a high place in public estimation. In this way stamina may be acquired that will carry many a youth safely through the stress and strife of dawning manhood.

MISTAKES OF THE PAST.

VERY LITTLE PROVISION MADE FOR PLAYGROUNDS BY TOWN COUNCILS.

In the rapid development of Canadian cities and the eagerness of its citizenship for wealth and commercial success, little thought has been given to the city beautiful. Few realized that the vacant lots on which their boyish pastimes were held would disappear so rapidly. Thoughtful men now see the mistake that has been made and are earnestly striving to restore the children's heritage. Much remains to be done, but public sentiment is sound on this question and will endorse the necessary expenditure.

Four or five district playgrounds will not by any means meet the need. Better three small playgrounds than one large one. The tendency is to establish playgrounds in the suburbs where land is cheap, but they should be just as numerous in the heart of the city where congestion of population breeds moral and physical degeneracy. A playground should be within five minutes' walk of every child, and if we allow a playground for each twenty thousand of a city's population we can see how far behind this standard most of our cities are at the present time.

SUPERVISION.

Equipment is essential, but far more important even than that is the supervision given to the children in their play. If enthusiastic directors with the proper moral viewpoint are given charge of these playgrounds they can do a truly national work in the development of a sound physique and high character. As much, if not more, can be learned from play than from books, though there need be no rivalry, and it is undoubtedly true that play diverts from crime and low pursuits; creating contentment and cheerfulness and inspiring youth with noble ideals.

PULL DOWN ROOKERIES.

If here and there a few old rookeries were torn down and the land devoted to play space more than one useful purpose would be served. Two hundred feet frontage with the ordinary depth of one hundred and fifty

feet would make a good neighborhood playground. Too many children gathered in one place is not desirable.

WINTER SPORTS.

Children need outdoor amusements in winter as well as in summer, and if there is the willingness to provide for their needs it can be done without great expense. Free skating rinks should be numerous. Thousands of



PLEASURES OF COUNTRY LIFE.

children have been denied the pleasure and benefit of skating because they could not pay for admission to rinks. The civic government, as the guardian of children should be interested in the welfare and happiness of future citizens, and should make recreation and simple sport as free as the air. Healthy enjoyment should never depend on the possession of wealth. The

fact of being a child is the all-sufficient reason why play should be encouraged, and every facility provided.

CREATE PUBLIC INTEREST.

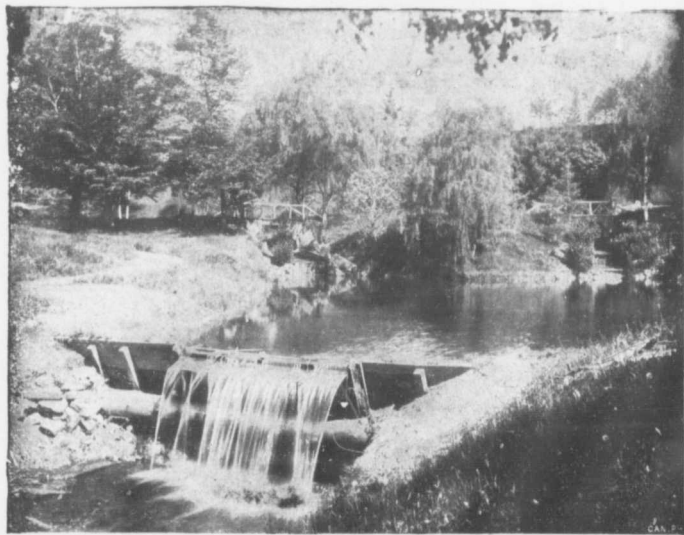
To secure the proper number of playgrounds, rinks, toboggan slides, gymnasiums, bath houses, etc., will require constant agitation for years to come. If the enthusiasm lags they will not be provided, for large expenditure will be necessary. Therefore may we not appeal confidently on behalf of the children to men in authority, aldermen, school trustees, editors, business men, educators—to keep the playground movement constantly in view, giving it their endorsement and advocacy whenever possible, remembering that the best type of citizen can be evolved only from the healthy, robust child, who has had a free and well-rounded youth spent in cheerful and clean moral environment.



BEAUTIFUL HOME SURROUNDINGS, BUT NO CHILDREN IN SIGHT.



LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE.



NATURE'S PLAYGROUND.

REGULATIONS FOR PLAYGROUNDS ASSOCIATION.

THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE:

1. (a) To promote healthful recreation.
(b) To stimulate public opinion in favor of establishing playgrounds and social centres in the municipality, especially in the more congested districts thereof.



MEN IN THE MAKING.

- (c) To familiarize ratepayers generally with the advantages of supervised playgrounds and social centres as part of our educational system.

(d) To accept voluntary contributions, and to obtain funds from other sources for the following purpose, namely:—

To acquire land in suitable districts and to equip the same for the purpose of playgrounds in Summer or Winter, or both, and to equip playgrounds generally, as well as social centres.

2. The fees for membership shall be as follows:—Active members, \$1.00 per annum. Sustaining members, \$5.00 per annum. Life members, \$100.00 per annum.
3. The Annual Meeting of the Association shall be held in the month of of each year, on such day, and at such time and place as may be fixed by the Executive Committee. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Executive Committee, or by the President or Secretary on the requisition of ten members. Notice of the holding of any Annual or General Meeting shall be sent to each member by mail, at least two days previous to the holding of same, and shall also be announced in the newspapers.
4. The officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting in each year, and shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Assistant-Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor and Solicitor, who shall compose the Executive Committee, with the addition of members, making twenty in all, to which shall be added ex-presidents, who shall be ex-officio members of such Committee. Sub-committees for various special duties may be elected at any monthly meeting of the Executive Committee. Vacancies occurring in the Executive Committee during any year may be filled by the remaining members thereof.
5. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held on the last ———day in each month, at such time and place as may be determined by that Committee. Five members thereof shall constitute a quorum. Special meetings may be called at any time by the President or Secretary upon the request of any five members of the Committee.

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6. The Executive Committee may appoint such other officers and agents as they may deem necessary to further the objects of the Association, and in the appointment of sub-committees shall not be restricted to members of the Executive Committee, but may appoint thereto other members of the Association as they may see fit.



AWAY FROM CITY TEMPTATIONS.

7. The Executive Committee may enact by-laws for the transaction of the business of the Association, for the regulation, control and management of playgrounds and social centres, as well as defining the duties of paid officers and others, and for all requisite purposes in connection with the Association, and shall generally during their term of office have full and complete management, control and disposal of the affairs, property and funds of the Association.

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8. The President, or in his absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, shall preside at meetings of the Association, and of the Executive Committee, or in their absence by a chairman, to be elected by a majority of the members then present.
 9. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep minutes of all the proceedings of the Association and Executive Committee, and he shall record the same in books to be provided for that purpose; also conduct all correspondence and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Executive Committee.
 10. The Treasurer shall receive and have charge of all funds belonging to the Association, and shall forthwith deposit same in some incorporated Bank, to be designated by the Executive Committee, to the account of the Association. All cheques thereon shall be countersigned by the President, or, in his absence, by the Secretary. All accounts are to be passed before payment by the Executive Committee, and the Treasurer shall report to the Board from time to time, and present financial statements, as may be required, and shall submit at the Annual Meeting detailed statement of receipts and expenditures made up to the close of each financial year of the Association which shall be the 31st day of December. Such Annual Statements shall be duly audited by the Auditor of the Association.
 11. No alterations or additions shall be made to these Regulations except at a meeting of the Executive Committee, at which at least seven members shall be present, and provided also that written notice of the proposed change shall have been given at least one month previous to the consideration of the same, and such alterations or additions, if passed, shall have effect only until confirmed at the next following Annual Meeting of the Association.
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EXCELLENT PROGRESS IN TORONTO.

After a good deal of agitation the Toronto Playgrounds' Association was formally organized at a meeting held in the City Hall, on June 2nd, 1908. What has been accomplished since then was admirably set forth by Mayor Hocken in his inaugural address to the City Council on January 11, 1914:

"The position of Toronto with respect to the encouragement of outdoor



WHERE JIM AND SAM HUGHES PLAYED LACROSSE!

recreation is second to no city of like size in America." Such was Mayor Hocken's declaration in his Inaugural Message.

"During the past four years," he said, "we have expended the sum of \$1,472,978 in the purchase of park lands and playgrounds, increasing our holdings in that period from 1,546 acres to 1,845 acres, and to-day these lands are valued at \$13,000,000. There is still pressing need of more park lands in the east, north and northwest portions of the city, but this need being fully recognized, it is intended that at an early date these districts shall be amply provided for in this regard."

“Every reasonable effort is being and will be made to further the cause of good citizenship represented in properly supervised healthy outdoor games and exercises, and to this end the parks of the city are being fully utilized. We have now established thirty-two baseball diamonds, thirty-five football fields, sixty-five tennis courts, six bowling greens, three lacrosse fields, and two quouting grounds, and this winter are operating thirty-four skating rinks, thirty-one hockey rinks, and five toboggan slides. The annual outlay upon these classes of sport totals \$31,000.

“The supervised playground movement, while still in its infancy in our city, is being rapidly developed, and an idea of its growth may be had from the fact that while in 1909 our expenditure upon playground maintenance amounted to only \$1,134, the outlay for this purpose during last year was nearly \$18,000. It is proposed during the present year to establish seven additional supervised playgrounds in various parks, which will give a total of fourteen play-centres distributed throughout the city.

“The establishment of a system of boulevards and parkways is an important feature of our park development, the initial steps towards which have been taken in the building of a considerable section of the lake front boulevard, and the completion of the first section of the Humber river boulevard. Plans for the construction of forty-two miles of this system are in course of preparation, and with such of this work carried on from year to year as our resources will permit, and with our needs in the future acquisition of parks, squares and playgrounds and their development carried out as planned, Toronto should, in a comparatively short time, be possessed of a splendid parks system.”

TORONTO, April 3rd, 1914.