

(January 17th.)

Municipal Playgrounds.

BY C. A. B. BROWN AND JAMES L. HUGHES.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject of "Municipal Playgrounds," Mr. C. A. B. Brown and Mr. J. L. Hughes spoke as follows:—

Mr. Brown said: *Mr. President and Members of the Canadian Club*,—It is an unusual pleasure to have the privilege of addressing this Club on so important a subject. Mr. Armour (the first Vice-President of the Club, who occupied the chair) has very kindly alluded to the fact that I had the honor of being the first Treasurer of the Canadian Club. I remember well its formation. A number of us met in the piano warerooms of the Mason and Risch Piano Company and founded the Club. None of us then realized what the institution was to become, that it would grow to the importance it has attained, and become the parent of scores of thriving institutions stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

I remember that first meeting as though it were yesterday. There were not many present, but all those there were much in earnest. By arrangement we decided to hold the first banquet of the Club at Harry Webb's restaurant and dedicate the organization to further the cause of Canada and Canadians. It was an interesting banquet. We invited a number of gentlemen to address us. E. E. Sheppard gave a splendid speech and Hunter was there to give us the humorous view. Then dark days fell for a little while on the Club and it looked as though it were going to become merely a weak exponent of the usual debating society. Some of us were almost

Mr. C. A. B. Brown has been a member of the Board of Education in Toronto for twenty-seven years. He has been twice chosen as the Chairman of the Board, and he has been chairman of all the important committees of the Board. He has taken a deep interest in the securing of playgrounds for the children, in the Penny Bank in the schools, and in having the schools properly lighted for use by parents in the evenings.

Mr. James L. Hughes has been Inspector of Schools in Toronto since 1874. He has an international reputation as a lecturer and writer on educational subjects, and is an enthusiastic supporter of the kindergarten, the playground and the manual training and domestic science classes as features of a rational educational system.

disgusted that we had helped to bring it into being. But we were needlessly alarmed. The Club has made good. It has become all and more that we hoped for it. It stands to-day as a credit to Toronto, and in the larger sense as a credit to Canada.

I had been looking forward to to-day's meeting. I felt that an intellectual feast was awaiting us. The playground problem appeals to me, and I sincerely regret that Dr. Gulick, who is a foremost exponent of the great movement, has been unavoidably detained from being with us. I am still more sorry to learn that the reason of his absence is illness. I have been asked to say a few words. They will be few I can assure you. Nevertheless the subject is one of such importance that I could not do otherwise than accept your kind invitation.

The playgrounds problem particularly appeals to me. For twenty-seven years I have been a member of the Board of Education, and I know something of the difficulty experienced in years gone by in getting adequate playgrounds for the schools. Of late years the difficulty has been somewhat alleviated by the liberality of the Council, but we still need to enlarge our playgrounds. I am glad Mayor Geary is here, for I want the Council to pay further heed to the demands of the Board of Education for larger and better playgrounds.

The playgrounds movement started in Toronto in earnest two years ago. Something has been accomplished. We had seven supervised playgrounds last year. We are adding two more. But there is room for more. A large playground in the heart of the city would do great good. All you have to do to convince yourselves of this is to visit Brant street and see scores of children making slides and sand boxes and what-not. I met a policeman when I was down there last. I said to him, "What do you think of it Officer?" He replied promptly, "It's a grand thing. It's going to make a new home for the play of the children. It's going to keep them away from the lanes and alleys."

These supervised playgrounds are grand things. There is an athletic instructor who is paid \$80 per month and there are two teachers from the kindergarten. The teachers are supervising, not restraining. The young folks are given a good healthy latitude.

My zeal for playgrounds was first fired by an interesting experience. I was going down Duchess street one day and I stopped to watch a number of little children surrounding a dripping hydrant and making mud pies on the pavement. Now this was not very nice, either for the children or for the

asphalt. I said to myself. Surely the city of Toronto is big enough and generous enough to encourage the establishment of supervised grounds in which the activities and energies of the men and women of to-morrow can find their natural output for development. So we asked Dr. Gulick to come here to help still further to arouse the public spirit of our citizens. We are seeking the endorsement of the Canadian Club. When we heard he was not able to come we were greatly disappointed, but when it was kindly suggested that the Club was willing to hear a few words from the President of the Playgrounds Association, I felt it a duty and a privilege to do what I could. If the time ever comes that Dr. Gulick is able to visit us I hope the Canadian Club will turn out in large numbers and hear what he has to say. It will do us all good.

There should be no difficulty in securing money for this splendid enterprise. We have in our association now a large number of members at a membership of \$1 per year. If we go about it in earnest we shall have no real difficulty in securing the necessary funds to equip the schools of Toronto with the best of playgrounds.

I shall not detain you further. I am not a public speaker. But I want to encourage the movement. It will redound to the credit of Toronto and her schools. We are developing our school system. We are now erecting modern schools in every particular. In two years from now every school in the city will be fire-proof. I thank you, gentlemen, for the kindly hearing you have given me.

Mr. Hughes said: *Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club*,—I would not have you understand for a moment that Mr. Brown's failure to solicit subscriptions to the Playgrounds Association meant that we were not ready and willing to take your dollars and give you the honor of becoming members of the Association. It is a great work and we want the co-operation of everyone we can get. Mr. Russell Snow is our treasurer, so you can send your money any time to Mr. Brown, Mr. Snow, Mr. Simpson, or myself and we will be glad to welcome you.

Most of you will recall the story of the Greek philosopher, who lay dying. His people desired to do him honor by observing his birthday as a national holiday every year. He was asked what form he would prefer the observation and celebration of the day to take. He replied, "Let the boys play."

That is grand philosophy. I would change it only in this. I would make it, "Let the children play," for the girls need it just as much as the boys, yes, and they need it more. There are few things to equal the advantages of play to develop the child physically, mentally and morally.

In 1900, the German government set out to determine why their soldiers were deteriorating in physical endurance. Those who undertook the enquiry reported that while Germany had the best system of physical culture in the schools, that formal training was not sufficient. So they recommended to the government that Germany send sixty men over to study the English games. They were sent and in five years more than 400 playgrounds were established. In England itself the movement, of which Mrs. Humphrey Ward is the head, has made rapid strides.

Toronto has the finest opportunity for playgrounds in the world. We were behind, but we are catching up. In the United States many of the best Christian workers have devoted themselves to the problem of opening up playgrounds in the large cities. In New York they have actually torn down squares that the children might play on the grass. This is wise and far-seeing, for playgrounds have a real educational value.

Play is the finest possible process for developing the child physically, intellectually and morally. The Germans are becoming great because they are learning to play. Froebel, the great educational philosopher, recognized the educational value of play. When the physicians examining the British soldiers at Aldershot, found their men deteriorating in lung power, they urged the playgrounds in the open-air to develop the physique and lung circulation power. Dr. Schmitt, a celebrated German, has said that the lung capacity can be increased six inches before the age of fourteen years by running games alone.

In these times there is a tendency in the hustle and bustle of city life to develop a condition of system which is called "nerves." Medical men have stated repeatedly that the best means of curing these defects is by play. Play will revolutionize the neurological condition, they tell us. It is not enough to know what is wrong unless we can prescribe the remedy. There are two ways of dealing with this neurological condition: first, by proper nutrition or feeding; second, by proper physical exercise, or play.

The child, even if healthy, gains great advantages from play. It is the best physical training. No mere system of

formal physical culture, can give any such results. The game calls every department of the child's physique into play. It gives freedom and grace of body, and possesses great intellectual advantages. The brain and the body are co-ordinate in the game. The child takes in and works out. We train the child to take in. He may be stuffed full of knowledge, but it is of little service to God or humanity unless he has the executive power, the motive power, of giving out. Nothing develops this so completely, naturally and effectively, as play.

Take the boy in the lacrosse game. He has the ball. How long may he, must he, keep it? In that fraction of a second he sees the whole field and the relationship of all the units on the field. He sees and judges and acts. He must dodge under, overtip or try the circular turn. He must decide the right thing and do it. How useful such a training is! It is the highest form of intellectual attainment.

And morally the game is as valuable as it is physically or intellectually. The player learns self-control. There are two kinds of self-control. Negative control is the power to keep away from wrong. The positive control is more potent than the negative control. Take the boy in a game of basketball, or lacrosse or association foot-ball. What a grand chance he has to develop the whole man. He must have two kinds of self-control to be successful. There are things he must not do. He must refrain from these. Then he must know the best thing to do and do it. That is positive self-control, and he learns it in playing any organized game.

Then he must know how to bear defeat bravely—and there is a great moral lesson there. There was a time, not so very long ago, when it was more or less common to fight the successful visiting team, to chase them home with sticks and stones. But I am glad to say that such methods are now seldom heard of. Young manhood has learned another great lesson from play. The boy has learned to cheer those who are capable of achieving greater success than himself and his fellows. That's something worth while. Josh Billings said, you remember, "Any man may fall, but it's only a fool who lies and kicks when he is down."

That's the thing our boys must learn, and they learn it best at play. They want the pluck that starts again. There is a lesson for fond mothers, too. The child falls and is hurt. Mother lifts him, calls him, "poor dear little tootsy-wootsy." She rocks him and pets him and gives him a sugar-plum. It's a dangerous thing for the child. By-and-bye when he is a

man of forty in business and meets difficulties, he will still be a tootsy-wootsy waiting for comfort and help.

The game teaches reverence for law. Plato has pointed out that reverence for law can be taught in the game better than by any other method. The boy loves the law of the game. A dispute arises and the latest "Spalding" is produced. Its ruling is unquestioned. That's a mighty element in the training of the race. The game teaches individual responsibility to the whole. That's a grand lesson—that you mean something in the world, that you have something to do for the benefit of all. The boy gets it in the team. He learns it when he masters team-play. He knows that if he does not do his part he is weakening the whole team. There is supreme power in mastering that point. It broadens the vision. It teaches the larger team-play in the greater game of civilization and of human development. We are not concerned merely individually for ourselves; we have our responsibility to our fellowmen. That is the ideal of unity and of co-operation. Here is where we all want to get in the game. The boy who is after only individual glory, who aims to shine by playing to the gallery, has no permanent place in the game. He must learn that it is not the individual but the team work that counts. He must learn the lesson of working together. Expanded this lesson has unlimited possibilities. It merges upon the ideal. It tends towards the great end when the whole race shall work together for the achievement of Divine purposes.

Lastly, the greatest of all results is the creation or the development of the achieving tendency. There are three great tendencies. The tendency to do things; the tendency to do things planned by himself; and the tendency to work together. I am afraid I have kept you too long, but I was anxious to say a word to make clear the great importance from every viewpoint of the playgrounds movement. It is a project that merits in a peculiar and emphatic manner the hearty and whole-souled support of every loyal and patriotic citizen.
