

(August 30)

The Boy Scout Movement.

BY SIR ROBERT S. BADEN-POWELL.*

A DDRESSING a joint meeting of the Canadian and Empire Clubs on the subject, "The Boy Scout Movement," Lieutenant-General Sir Robert S. Baden-Powell said:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—It is very difficult for me to express my very sincere thanks to the members of the two societies who have so kindly agreed to meet me here to-day, for it gives me a unique opportunity of meeting the very men I want to meet in this great city.

I have come here with a fad of my own, and I find it already received as something that may be of value to your country. If it spreads here to the extent it promises to do, it may also be of value to our great Empire.

It is merely a suggestion that I made in the matter of training boys which you seem to have taken up with the idea of making it of real service to the country and the Empire. If you succeed in doing this—for I leave it in the hands of the citizens themselves—I think you will be doing a very great work. At the same time it is not any credit to me if it succeeds, because success depends entirely on the men and the manner in which it is taken up locally. The boys seem ready enough to accept the training. It merely rests with the men of the country to adopt it, and put it in working order.

I will, if I may, in the short time available, briefly sketch to you the details of the scheme, what is the need of it, how it is carried out, and what possibilities lie before it in your own country.

Scouting, as you know, may be taken from a military point of view, but we advocate it entirely from the peace point of view. That is, the kind of scouting to which I refer under that title is the work done by the pioneers of civilization on the frontiers of our Empire in all corners of the globe. We try

* The fame of Sir Robert Baden-Powell as the defender of Mafeking had scarcely dimmed before the world beheld him as the founder of the Boy Scout movement, which has spread with the utmost rapidity in different parts of the Empire. It has the double value of appealing to the best and most intelligent side of a boy's nature and contributing to his value as a future citizen. Sir Robert has been a soldier nearly all his life, and the South African war is but one episode of his noble services.

to teach the things done and known by explorers, frontiersmen, backwoodsmen, hunters, and even such men as your Northwest Mounted Police, men who are doing the work of civilization under exceptional difficulties of climate and surroundings, relying entirely upon themselves for carrying out their work, full of resource, energy, endurance, hope and pluck. These men, doing their work in whatever time or place simply because it is their duty, helpful to each other in times of trouble, full of cheery words and ready for self-sacrifice, are among the best types of manliness in our race. They are types which we hold up to these lads as ideals for them to follow, and they naturally possess a great romantic prestige for boys, whatever class you take them from, whether in city or country, or of whatever religion or nationality they may be. Therefore, we apply training in the elementary work of backwoodsman-ship to the boys in our cities. We go from one thing to another, and gradually introduce other attributes of frontiersmen which go to make up manliness of character and good citizenship.

Whether there is need of such training among boys in your country is a question for you to decide. In the Old Country, with its great teeming cities, for all the lads who are rapidly drifting to the parting of the ways where they become workers or shirkers, such a training seems very desirable. They can learn the three R's in school, but they do not there learn character, manliness or energy such as will be useful to them in after life. After all, take any man who succeeds in this world, it is not from his school learning that he gets on, but it is entirely from the character he develops in himself. A school for character, therefore, seems very much needed amongst our rising generation, and particularly in the Old Country in the great cities and state of over-civilization in which we live.

In your country it is another matter. You do not suffer from the same disease which is creeping in among us of unemployedness and unemployableness. At the same time, there are points about your lads which are similar to those of lads in other parts of the world. They want character of one kind or another. Your lads have plenty of resourcefulness, character and independence. The only danger is they may get too much of it. You want also discipline and self-sacrifice, courtesy and chivalry. All these points can very readily be instilled into these boys once you get hold of them by means that really strike them, and that is done to a great extent in scouting.

There is another point which may appeal to you as Canadians. You are all of you engaged in the great work of making a big nation, and naturally you have to meet and over-

come a great many difficulties in doing so. To get people for your great country you have to take them from many sources, many nationalities, and you want to weld these together with some touch of nature that makes the whole of them akin. This is one small means to that end.

This association of boys, spreading as it has not only through the Empire but into different countries throughout the world, brings the lads into touch with each other in a way that was not at all foreseen when we first started it. They all recognize they are joining a great brotherhood, they all feel they are comrades to back each other up, to be friends with each other in whatever part of the globe they may be, whatever may be their nation, belief or standing in life. They are all brothers. Well, it will be a great thing if you can weld together your rising generation with some such tie as this, so that they will feel themselves brothers in touch with each other rather than only in imagination. If this movement will help to bring this about, it will be a great thing for your nation in the future. It is well to be successful on the material side, but you must have the spirit in it as well.

The methods by which we bring about this training are, as I have hinted, those which appeal to the boy himself. So many of your systems of education do not directly appeal to the boy. We tell him to go and be good. If he has any spirit in him he turns around and goes the other way. In this training we tell him to be a scout, hunter, backwoodsman, frontiersman, to hunt in the woods for red Indians or whatever you like, and he is only too ready to do it, whatever the game may be. Thus we instil into him by romance, by practice, by games and competitions all those different points that go to make up a really good man of strength and character, physical as well as moral. Our scheme simply supplies the tools for working, and we leave it to the individual man trainers and the locality to utilize it to the best advantage as they see it. We only offer badges for skill in the various arts of scouting.

The boy begins by getting a Scout's badge when he has qualified himself in all the elements of backwoodsmanship. When he can look after himself in the wilds, can make a fire, rig up his own shelter, manage a boat, be able to swim, to signal his friends, tie various kinds of knots, find his way by the sun and stars or a map and be generally efficient out of doors, he is then given his Scout's badge. After that he goes on to want badges of efficiency in various handicrafts and occupations. We want to make a useful man of him, and if he can learn the various handicrafts we give a badge for carpentering, black-

smithing, telegraphy, and in all thirty-three different kinds of trades and handicrafts. We do not teach him these things, but we tell him the tests to which we shall put him. He is attracted by the badges, and he gets friends who are experts in the various lines to teach him what he wants to know. Then the boys offer themselves for examination, and if they are successful, we give them their badges. In that way they gradually accumulate a great number of badges of efficiency. The probability is that among these different handicrafts which they themselves pick up they will find one or another which suits them best, and they will develop most that one which will be their profession for life. At the same time, if they fail in that line, they can take up a second string or a third string until they find the occupation to which they are best adapted. However, they are not absolutely helpless and hopeless like the wasters at home to-day.

This is all done by an attractive method. The boys like it and work for it. They get their own uniforms by earning the money for themselves. They are not supposed to go out for subscriptions. In that way they discover they can make money if they try for it. One of the qualifications is that he must have a balance at the bank. It is not a very big balance. It is only one shilling. But he has broken the ice, and he has his bank book.

Well, gentlemen, this scheme is popular with boys. They have taken it up for themselves in most parts of the world, and our only difficulty is to give them officers who can teach them their work. It is not so difficult for the officers, but it is difficult for them to find time and inclination to look after the work. What we want is young fellows with the inclination for the work. I find in Canada that the young fellows range all the way from eighteen to eighty-one, and that once they take up the training they find it a very attractive and fascinating pastime, and that it really does do a great deal of good to the boys around them.

In organizing, first of all, we have a Council of elders in each province who back it up with the responsible authorities. Then in each city or centre we have a local association of representative gentlemen and those interested in the training of boys, and under them we have the Scoutmasters or officers to raise troops of boys and train them in the different local centres. The troops themselves are divided into units of eight boys, each unit under a boy leader. In that way we bring the responsibility down to the shoulders of the boys themselves, and there is nothing like putting the responsibility on

them at the very earliest age to put the right spirit and discipline into them.

Our training is not in opposition to any existing form of training. We work in unison with any body, such as the cadets, Y. M. C. A. and other organizations which are doing the same work in different ways. We do not want to have much religion in the training for we do not attempt to take the place of pastor or parents in teaching children what religion they should take up. But we expect the boy to have some form of religion of his own, and not only to profess it but to put it in practice while he is with us. One of the main steps towards getting him to put it in practice is that each boy is expected—and we put him on his honor to do it—to carry out some good deed every day to some animal or person.

I have to-day received information of one of your local scouts who woke up in the night to find he had forgotten to do his good turn. He heard a mouse in the trap, so he got up, went to that mouse, tenderly took it out of the trap, and—handed it to the cat (laughter).

Gentlemen, I trust you will excuse that digression.

The other point in our training which excites a great deal of interest amongst you and all loyal citizens is, what is our attitude to the cadets. We have hoped we are backing up the cadet movement, and we are filling up blanks where the cadet movement is not possible. That is to say, in communities where settlement is widely scattered, as occurs in your outlying districts, the cadet movement becomes impossible. The scout movement comes in in such places because our small units of eight boys can be raised in any township or group of homesteads and keep up their work.

We do not have any kind of military training among the boy scouts. We avoid it, for the tendency of such training is to make the boy a part of a machine, whereas we aim to develop the individuality of every boy, bring out his personal qualities and make the most of them. The discipline we put the boys through is very different from the mere parade disciplines which they would get in the army. We put it on another basis altogether. We try to make it a moral discipline. The boy recognizes his senior, his master, as his friend, and one whom he is bound to serve through sheer loyalty. Whatever his feelings may be, he must overlook them and follow out the wishes of his senior, and back him up out of a spirit of loyalty and civility. It is curious that that catches more permanent hold of the boys than does the mere obeying of orders on parade, which he is apt to forget afterwards. Often, too, mili-

tary training for boys is strongly objected to by people of many denominations, and by many parents on conscientious grounds. They do not think that boys of that age should have ideas of fighting, of blood-thirstiness put into their heads before they are able to judge for themselves what is required of them. Thus by the avoidance of military training, many of these send their boys into the Scouts because it is a good training for citizenship, if nothing else.

We do not neglect patriotism, either. We touch so many aspects of campaigning and woodcraft and so on, that finally when they do take up the idea of their duty by their country and join the defence forces, they do so with a very much better foundation than they would get from being merely drilled as cadets. They are all round good soldiers and trained in many details, such as signalling, choosing and making camp, riding, paddling, hunting, finding their way by the sun and stars, and all the attributes of soldiers which are scarcely touched upon in the training of Cadets in their drill. We teach these things by getting the boys to learn them for themselves on certain definite lines, rather than trying to drill it into them. Wherever cadet corps exist we help them in every way, and they take up our training in addition to their own very often. They do this with the idea that it is not so important that the cadets should have a knowledge of drill as that they should have an actual knowledge of the campaigning work of soldiers. The reason that the Boers were able to maintain themselves so long in the field against a vastly superior force was simply because they were good campaigners, although they had never had a bit of military training in their lives. They were all better for having a training in the woods. Our boys have an all-round training instead of the narrow one of military discipline. It commends itself to most trainers of boys in that we do not insist on military training as the ultimate aim of it. Our methods are so elastic that a Scoutmaster may train his troop on any particular line he likes. So a large proportion of our troops are specialists. They know all about fire protection, perhaps, or they are ambulance troops, or missionary troops doing good work among the poor in their neighborhood. You can have cadet, soldier and sailor troops also.

With the sailor troops you have big opportunities. We have in all the seaports of Great Britain troops of Scouts who take up sailing as their specialty. On your great lakes and rivers it would be quite possible for you to raise a large force of Sea-Scout troops. In view of your navy of the future this may be of value to you in the time to come. At any rate, the training

as sailors cannot but do good for the boys, as it makes each boy use his head and hands instead of making him part of a machine. It appeals quite strongly to the boys themselves. A few ships that can be used as training ships, and which the boys can use as a sort of club, are all that is required. It would prove a splendid club-room or house where boys could go in the evenings and spend week-ends learning the elements of seamanship. I no sooner mentioned the matter at Vancouver than a gentleman offered a ship right off, and I believe another is being offered in Victoria. We only need a few individuals like that, and we will have Sea-Scouts. If there is anyone who has an old ship he doesn't want, I hope he won't forget this.

The Boy Scouts so far as they have gone in your own city and neighborhood are a most promising lot, but I can assure you they are only at the beginning of what they are going to be, because I see such a splendid spirit among those who are working with them. It only needs interest and backing from men like yourselves, who represent all the leading industries of the place, to spread the movement very far and very wide. Employers of labor have a great interest in seeing that the boys when young learn to use their heads and hands. I hope you will consider the different aspects of the scheme, how it appears likely to you to benefit the country and Empire at large, and give it encouragement in any way you find it possible, because I believe that with such backing it is bound to go ahead, and catch hold of a large number of the youth of your country and make them into a solid block of good citizenship that will make for the future welfare and prosperity of your country. A country is not great merely through its material resources or its great armaments or navies, but it depends in great degree on the spirit and character of the nation, and the character of the nation after all is only built up through the character of the individual units in that nation. I hope therefore you will see that there is a chance here through this scheme of building up the characters of the rising generations so that your nation of the future will be a nation of great character, and therefore one of the strongest bonds in this great Empire.

I thank you most cordially for listening to me so patiently, and only ask you to help us and encourage us in any way you can in the future.