

SCHOOL BOYS' PARADISE

Boston Sets Pace for Cities of America.



OLD FASHIONED LEAP FROG 90

The principle of "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is permeating the educational idea of America, and in all of the large cities of the country there are developing definite plans for providing the school children with places and apparatus for having a jolly good time. It is perhaps fitting that Boston, that city where the rights of the school children were first championed and the freedom of Boston Common was forever established, should take the advanced step in this matter of public playgrounds for children and set the pace for the other cities of the country.

When Boston's elaborate scheme is fully carried out she will be entitled to the claim of being the school children's paradise. Under the authority conferred by the legislature in April of last year the Boston school committee takes full control of and fosters school athletics and the play of the children.

The act was put through the legislature mainly through the efforts of Joseph Lee of Boston, who has been called "the father of the playgrounds in the United States." This act puts under the school department all playground activities and provides ample funds for the work, with provision that such funds may not be used for any other purpose. The drafting of a detailed program of the work has been done by Dr. Thomas F. Harrington, director of school hygiene, and has been approved by the school committee.

The 28 school yards of the city are to be specially fitted and equipped for the school children under 12 years of age and will be open the year round. The middle-sized boys, from about 11 to 17, will be specially provided for by a dozen larger playgrounds, where football and baseball and other sports can be indulged. These playgrounds will have regular superintendents, while during school day afternoons and Saturday mornings additional supervision will be had from submasters.

In addition to these 40 playgrounds there will be four large central ones, namely: Charlestown playground, Charlestown; Cottage street playground, East Boston; First street playground, South Boston, and the Columbus avenue playground. Such playgrounds as Boston Common, Franklin Square, Savin Hill, Franklin Field, Franklin Park, Charlesbank, Chestnut Hill reservoir, Wood Island Park, Marine Park and Fenway are not included, but they go to swell the unparalleled facilities which Boston is prepared to offer for the enjoyment of her school children.

Careful calculation has estimated that this work will cost something

like \$58,376 the first year. According to the legislative act, the school department is allowed for the work five cents on each \$1,000 of valuation in the city. This amounts to \$56,791.39 for the present year, not including the separate appropriation for nurses, which now comes as an additional asset for the playground activities. Thus the school department already has assured something like \$10,000 in excess of its estimated requirements.

Mr. Lee, who, as we have said, was largely instrumental in securing the legislative enactment which makes this elaborate scheme of playgrounds possible for Boston, is very enthusiastic over the outlook, and is specially hopeful of that feature of the plan which brings the teachers upon the playgrounds as a factor and sharer in the sports of the children. "Some people feel as if this employment of



schoolmasters on the playgrounds were almost the same as depriving the boy of his play," commented Mr. Lee. "They think it hard that he should have the master over him during the best hours of the day five days in the week, and that then, in his own precious, free time, on the playground where if ever he is going to have a chance to carry out his own ideas, he encounters the same old pedagogue.

"But these people have misconceived the master. He will not meet the same old pedagogue. The pedagogue he meets will in the first place be young; and in the second place he will not be the same. From the boy's point of view, he will not be made over by this new relation. Playing with the boys is going to have as good an effect on these young submasters as it does on the boys themselves; and it is going to entirely modify and recreate the relation between them.

"I believe that this new acquaintance of the children and teachers is going to be one of the most valuable results of the new plan. A man who knows the boys only in school is like a naturalist who should study animals only in a menagerie. To know the boy you have got to know him in the wild state. You must follow him to his natural habitat and see what he likes when he is most himself. You must see how he reacts to his most vital impulses; and it is surely on the playground that these have their fullest swing.

"The masters on the playground will get to know the boys, and the boys will get to know the masters, to see, even that they have some human traits—though, perhaps, at first in an obscured and undeveloped form—that they can play ball and do other stunts of an interesting description.

"As a result of this better understanding of each other, and of the warm and loving sympathy that comes from playing together on the same team and being interested in the same games, great things will come both to the teachers and the boys. As the head of one of our best boarding schools once put the case to me: 'When you play with the boys on the playground, the problem of discipline disappears.'

"The idea, though new in Boston, has been tried elsewhere, and has indeed probably been the practice of enthusiastic schoolmasters ever since the days of Charon, the Centaur, who had the bringing up of Jason, Hercules and other promising Grecian youngsters quite a spell ago, and who, as Hawthorne discovered, used to give them rides on his back and otherwise teach them the game as it was played in those days in Greece.

"On three of the playgrounds, where the bigger boys will have their special chance, there will also be children's corners, with tilts and swings and teeter ladders and sand boxes for the smaller children, carried on in the same way as the school yards. These will be true neighborhood playgrounds, where all the children, indeed the whole family, can go together, the sort of playgrounds that all our larger ones ought to be and must eventually become.

"Then there is the coaching of the high school boys and the impressing upon them, if Dr. Harrington has his way, that winning is not the only thing—that the great American virtue of get-there is after all not the final word in matters of sport nor of anything else, whatever the fashion in our more popular colleges may teach upon this subject.

"And a very good feature of the plan is that the high school girls also are by no means left out of it. They are going still to be taught dancing and gymnastics as under the existing system. These same big girls constitute the great unsolved problem of the modern playground.

"At the top of the system there will remain, under the control of the park department, Franklin Field (our playground university, the place where the teams graduated from the local grounds go to show their proficiency and complete their education) and the golf links, tennis grounds, etc., on the various parks.

"The system, taken as a whole, makes Boston the leading example in the country of play and physical education placed fairly and squarely in the hands of the school committee. And that is where it should be placed."

Oh, Goodness!

"Where do asps come from?"

"What's an asp?"

"Why, these little snakes, you know—the kind that bit Cleopatra."

"Oh, yes. I think they come from Asia."

"What makes you think so?"

"I'm sure I've heard of a place called 'Aspasia.'"—Cleveland Leader.

Well?

"Did the new laundry do your shirts up well?"

"Yep—did 'em up brown."—Cleveland Leader.

KIND THOUGHT OF THE BRIDE.

Possibly Turned Silly Custom Into Something Really Worth While.

"The most considerate girl I ever knew got married yesterday," said the man. "She showed her thoughtfulness in a most unusual way. The day before the wedding she called the attention of the rest of the family to a row of old shoes standing in a downstairs closet.

"I want you to throw these after the carriage," she said. "They are all mates. I collected them to throw away. I learned some time ago that certain poor souls who have hard work to get clothes of any description keep a lookout for big weddings. They hang around the house at going-away time and pick up the good luck shoes. Maybe they get a fit, and maybe they don't. Anyway, I've done all I could to accommodate them.

"Here are six pairs of shoes to be fired after me. If somebody doesn't get fitted in that collection, it isn't my fault."

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