

Physical education was expected to rectify the physical disabilities revealed in that draft. Now comes the 1940-41 draft and the rejection rate, according to preliminary surveys, appears to be as high as 25 years ago! The cry is that physical education has failed! And we must admit that we laid ourselves wide open for that charge by claiming that physical education laws and physical education classes proper could alleviate the physical defects revealed in the first draft! The feature article in the March issue of the Physical Education Journal seems to be written along that same vein, too!

For what defects are men rejected in the largest numbers? The causes (for 1940 rejections), according to a report in the Army Medical Bulletin, are in order: teeth, eyes, ears, mental and nervous diseases, heart, hernia, lungs, venereal, musculo-skeletal, and feet. The first three, defective teeth, eyes, and ears comprise 41% of the disqualifications!

Now what can physical education proper do to rectify these defects? Very little. Almost all these defects must be remedied by medical treatment under the direction of medical personnel. Participation in physical education classes and in athletics certainly isn't going to do it! And I believe it is true to state that 95% of our physical education courses of instruction actually consist of activity periods.

It may be within the province of instructional hygiene to initiate the correction, and to follow-up on the correction of such defects. But how many schools and how many physical educators conduct a really vital, academic course in hygiene which produces tangible results? These rainy-day, hit-or-miss, one-day-per-week, substitute-for-activity-class type of hygiene classes are not only ineffectual but are a waste of time.

Physical educators, in my humble opinion, have made a mistake to claim that the physical education program in itself, can remedy the type of physical (morphological and organic) defects which cause rejection by the Army.