

Speech

### Physical Fitness in a Democracy

A Nation that lacketh vision perisheth! Someone has also said, "God makes us wise to know, how strong the stalk must grow, that rears so fair a flower". While civilization, it seems, is moving steadily downward on the broad way of physical and moral self-destruction, this is the exact time, it seems to me, to launch a physical fitness campaign, to raise the physical powers of our nation, tenfold.

Physical powers which are chiefly muscular strength and endurance are the ultimate means of producing, transporting and distributing food, preparing shelter and manufacturing clothing. Learning, depends on physical, at least quite as much as on mental fitness. This is true for both children and adults, whether the learning be knowledge or skills--a pedagogical axiom, teachers are already re-discovering. The physically fit man or woman has at least capacity to serve others. And the greater the fitness the greater may be the service. Nor can men and women enjoy their leisure when physical powers are absent or even merely depleted.

As the giant oak drives its root like tentacles into the earth and clutches a giant boulder to make its attachments more secure so does the human body attach its ligaments and tendons to bones for muscular strength and physical security.

Seven eighths of the return circulation of the blood back to the heart is dependent upon muscular exercise. Finally, the physical powers of human bodies are the ultimate recourse for self-preservation. A strong man or nation may succumb but a weak one cannot long survive in a world of ruthless force. Indeed the relations between physical