

HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION  
IN NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS\*

by  
Harry A. Scott, Ph.D.  
The Rice Institute

The purpose of this meeting is to consider ways and means of making programs of school and community health, physical education and recreation more adequately serve the nation in its efforts to prepare for possible war. Many of the educational goals which we now seek, and most of the steps we shall take in the future will necessarily be based upon revised methods and philosophies brought about by the war situation abroad. Therefore, before proceeding with our deliberations it would be well briefly to consider a few elements in the background of our present national predicament, and some of the steps which have already been taken to reach our newer objectives.

It is slightly more than 20 years since the end of the first World War which left Germany an impoverished and broken nation. Today, however, we find her one of the mightiest, and certainly the most feared nation in the world. One might well ponder the sudden rise to power of this now reckless and irresponsible country. The answer will be found in the definite and aggressive plan of action which Germany devised to overcome her obstacles and reach the position where she finds herself today. Although her methods are reprehensible, we are awed at the tremendous tasks accomplished. These tasks have been achieved through the complete control and regimentation of all political, social, economic, religious, and educational institutions, and by the total destruction of anything which resembles personal freedom as we understand it.

The lesson that we should learn from the rise of Germany is that democracy cannot be defended; it must be achieved. In this country we have been awakened to the necessity of preparing ourselves against the invasion of our shores. We talk in terms of "defense" programs; of "defending democracy"; of "defending freedom", and so on. What we must come to realize is that a defensive attitude, or an attitude of isolation or appeasement is one that brings war, whereas an aggressive policy of fulfillment and action may avert it.

Peace is unquestionably a desirable goal toward which we should strive. It has been so since the beginning of civilization; for it is only during times of peace that men are free to accomplish the things which satisfy them, and benefit the society in which they live. There are times in the lives of men and nations, however, when their peace is threatened, and they must risk future security in order to preserve their individual and national integrity. Peace, therefore, cannot be maintained unless we are willing to run the risk of war.

In our thinking in this country we often consider democracy and freedom as one, and the same thing. This, however, is not exactly true. Democracy is a form of government which recognizes the integrity of the individual, and places the responsibility of the government in his hands. The will of the majority decides issues, and one is free within limits, to pursue life, liberty and happiness. Freedom, on the other hand, is a personal thing. It arises out of the hopes, ambitions and capacities of the individual. While it is true that certain forms of government

---

\* This paper was read before the College Men's Physical Education Section of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, which met in Atlantic City on May 2, 1941. The paper is being distributed by the College Physical Education Association through the Secretary.