

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTH  
Radio Program

February 10, 1939

"Social Dancing in the Physical Education Program"  
(Miss Jane Byrn and Mrs. Margaret Dart)

- Mrs. Dart Miss Byrn, there is an ancient Chinese proverb which states that "you can judge a kingdom by its dancing". I wonder if that bit of oriental wisdom is of any significance today.
- Miss Byrn I think it is, Mrs. Dart. I'm sure that those persons who are acquainted with the history and development of the folk forms of other countries and our own would be the first to agree that the dance of the people, more genuinely than any other form of physical activity, reflects the attitudes, temperament, philosophy and social conditions existing in any era. And that proverb, in my opinion, loses none of its significance when applied to the folk dancing of our own day, more frequently referred to as ballroom dancing or social dancing.
- Mrs. Dart Then I am not wrong in thinking that you mean our dancing today is as appropriate to the life we live here and now as was the dance of the Indian when he danced a prayer for rain?
- Miss Byrn Yes, that is true. The student who attends the weekly varsity is only remotely concerned about the prospect of rain, if he ever thinks about it at all, but rain to the Indian meant the difference between poverty and a life of abundance. One cannot by any stretch of the imagination conceive of the square dances of our forefathers evolving out of the manners and customs, in short, the life of the people of France in the seventeenth century. It would be no more ludicrous to expect that the minuet would be a logical expression of the urge to dance in our age.
- Mrs. Dart Granting this to be true, it would be logical to expect that any individual, dancing the particular dance that is the fashion of the moment, would so interpret the dance that it would possess many of the attributes of the personality of that individual.
- Miss Byrn Yes, Mrs. Dart, each one of us, unconsciously for the most part to be sure, reflects in our interpretation of the currently popular dance figures, differences in response to life in any age.
- Mrs. Dart It is not uncommon that we find courses in Social Dancing being offered in our schools now, more often than not sponsored by the physical education departments. Do you feel that this is a logical part of the physical education program?
- Miss Byrn Indeed I do, Mrs. Dart. Until comparatively recent years, social dancing was never included in the physical education program. Now it is being realized that the one physical activity which more people enjoy during youth and adulthood than any other should command a definite recognition of our opportunities in this direction. In the past there has been a reluctance on the part of physical education departments to assume any responsibility in the matter, partly due to so-called community taboos, whether real or imagined, but largely due to