

John Dewey makes the statement: "The idea that the need for play can be suppressed is absolutely fallacious, and the Puritanic tradition which disallows the need has entailed an enormous crop of evils. If education does not afford opportunity for wholesome recreation and training, capacity for seeking and finding it, the suppressed instincts find all sorts of illicit outlets, sometimes overt, sometimes confined to indulgence and imagination."

In respect to active play, the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church published in 1792 makes the following statement: "We shall therefore inflexibly insist on their rising early in the morning. . . this is of vast importance both to body and mind. . . On the same principle we prohibit play in the strongest terms. . . The student shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls play. Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety, for those who play when they are young will play when they are old."

Dr. Allen            Well, Ed, of course times have changed since then, and so has the reaction toward play. It is true that our pioneers did feel that if you played when you were young you would play when you were old, and play was a rather sinful extravagance of valuable time. But your suggestion is to teach them to play when they are young and they will realize its values and play when they grow up. And that brings us to the next point - a gymnasium and playground for every school. Would I be hurting anybody's feelings by saying that all progressive schools have this arrangement?

Dr. Elbel            I imagine that if Comenius, the old Moravian educator, could hear us he would get a laugh out of that one. You know that back in the 17th century he suggested a playground around each school. Naturally, it goes without saying that proper indoor and outdoor space is essential to the proper physical education program. The thoughtful parent and progressive school board now recognize these facts and are insisting upon adequate facilities. The mere fact that we have great open spaces is not enough. A recent survey showed that many Kansas schools do not have playgrounds, and as to indoor space, it is a necessity not only for housing basketball games and the spectators but for active use of the student body and the community at large.

Dr. Allen            Some one has said that the real sports promoters of America are the boards of education of our cities. They have built the gymnasias in which these sports are developed. Now, to the third point - education for leisure. We hear that over and over nowadays. The biological theory of play is that the animals exercised and used certain groups of muscles in their activity so that they could live. The cat played with its tail or a bounding ball so that it would more successfully catch the illusive mouse. Reduced to terms of childrens' activities, the child plays games so that its reactions and responses will be sharpened to avoid injury from the modern automobiles.