

## RECREATION

Since the unforgettable day of December 7, a great deal has happened to us. This Center is the climax of the sudden series of unexpected events. Since our arrival to this Center, our life has been much pleasanter than all of us had anticipated. We found life here more pleasant because of many things--among these is recreation.

This evening, I wish to discuss with you the importance of recreation.

When a large number of people who are naturally industrious and accustomed to bodily labor are suddenly deprived of their exertions, they must find another outlet for their energies. By exploding our pent-up energies into an all-out recreational activity, we receive in turn a rebounding echo of physical and moral fitness. Physical fitness is one of the most vital of all matters that confronts every man, woman and child of this Center. Through earnest and active participation in our many sports and supervised games, such as sumo and judo and track meets, we shall become healthy. But it is not the only claim of sports to make us physically strong. Sports gives to us the opportunity to learn and practice those fundamentals of good morals, namely, good sportsmanship, cooperation and good, clean fun. In baseball and basketball, we must exercise these virtues or never feel the pride of victory. Let us remember that moral purity and physical fitness is the dynamic unity without which no person can regain his happiness.

Aside from physical and moral fitness, recreation is important for its contribution to mental education. Daily at leisure and thinking of the unfairness of his evacuation may in time dull a man's senses to such an extent that he will lose forever the feeling of loyalty to his country and responsibilities as a citizen. For this reason, the kindergarten provides youngsters with proper mental education through simple games and lessons. The games of "go" and "shogi," which correspond to checkers and chess in America, give the same proper mental stimulation to the adults. The movies reach the favor and enthusiasm of all the Center, both young and old.

We in this Center are being put to the test of mental capabilities. For us the world is a challenging, testing, toughening world, and so we must be mentally equal to adjust ourselves to these different situations.

The third value of recreation, aside from its contribution to physical and mental advancement, is its effect as a diversion to the constant tension of partial confinement. Were it not for the fine system of recreation, the people of this Center, especially the younger set, would turn to gang rowdiness and unruly conduct to satisfy the cravings for excitement that is within all youth. It must be noted that psychiatrists have come to the conclusion that due to the lack of proper recreational facilities, many criminals of our penal institutions have been discharged a more hardened and bitter foe to society than upon their entrance. The young people of this Center are



fortunate that they may enjoy dancing and card parties, sports events and moving pictures. It is amusing to observe that more than 200 older men who never played games before and never expected to romp again now find themselves enthusiastically playing our Center "State League" baseball. These facts substantiate our conviction that no matter how long our confinement, recreation will guarantee that the future will see us better fit than ever to meet the problems of peace.

The importance of recreation has well been established. Shining like a candle in the dark, recreation will, in this moment of unfortunate circumstances, help us cross the river of defeat by its power of giving us the foundation to get physically and morally strong, mentally awake, and free from the depression of confinement.

We, as a race of people now prejudiced by war, must prepare ourselves to show this nation that we can and will contribute to the future prosperity and peace of all fellow men.

Coach Amos Alonzo Stagg, famed football mentor of C.O.P., poured out his philosophy of life to the Assembly Center by these words, "Never let depression get hold of you. Rise above it! Fight forward. Be everlastingly determined." What better opportunity is there to fight forward and train ourselves for this purpose than through recreation.

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