

**T**O EVOLVE A NEW KIND of soldiers' training-camp is the task of the new Federal Commission on Training-Camp Activities. Prevention, and effective action before the fact, is to be the principle upon which this Commission will attack the questions of drink and immorality. With the opening of the thirteen training-camps for the preliminary officers' training corps the work immediately got under way. One of the first demands is the cooperation of the community that has the camp settled in or near it. "So important, so primary, does the Secretary of War regard the work for which the new commission was created that if a community near which a camp is now situated persistently refuses to cooperate in the control of vice, the camp will be moved to some other place." Surrounding zones will contain a bar against the features objected to, but the main effort will be "to withdraw, so far as possible, the attention of the soldier from the rigid restrictions of the zones by the organized presentation of better means of recreation and enjoyment." In our department of Letters and Art may be read something of the plans already laid for one phase of the camps' relaxation. Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick is chairman of the Commission and comes equipped by special studies made on the Mexican border and in Canada. Other members are Dr. Joseph E. Raycroft, Professor of Hygiene and Director of Physical Education at Princeton University; Joseph Lee, president of the Playgrounds' Association of America; John R. Mott, of the International Y. M. C. A.; Lee F. Hanmer, of the Sage Foundation; Charles P. Neill, of Washington; Thomas J. Howells, of Pittsburg; Malcolm L. McBride, of Cleveland; and Major Palmer E. Pierce, of the United States Army. In the *New York Times* Mr. Fosdick gives an outline of the Commission's aims:

"Our first function is aimed, of course, to do away with the evils that have been too often associated with army life, not only in America, but in Europe. Our boys are to be drafted into service. We can not afford to draft them into a demoralizing environment. The responsibility of the Government is doubly obvious in view of the measure of conscription. A man might volunteer for service and run his chance with vicious surroundings. When conscription comes into play, however, the Government itself must assume the responsibility for eliminating these evils. . . . .

"On the positive side of our program is the necessity of

## THE LITERARY DIGEST

June 16, 1917

# MAKING

# DRINK

# AND

# VICE

# TABU

# AMONG

# SOLDIERS



competing with what I have termed 'demoralizing influences,' such as the saloon and the vice-resort. This function of our work divides itself naturally into several lines. Within the camp, activities of the Y. M. C. A., an organization now officially recognized by an executive order of the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies, form an important part in the recreational program. In connection with the work, but under

the direct control of the Army, is the promotion of athletic sports and games, such as are now carried on in England under the Aldershot plan, and promoted to a large extent in Canada. Briefly, these games are built up on the interunit system, their idea being to develop the competitive instinct in the soldier. Boxing, wrestling, bayonet exercise, and all forms of hard physical games are followed. Everybody must take part. Squads compete with squads, companies with companies, regiments with regiments, brigades with brigades, and divisions with divisions.

"A member of the British Mission now in Washington, Colonel Goodwin, told me that these games which had been encouraged—in fact, enforced—by the army officials in France were one of the great influences in keeping men sane and balanced behind the lines. The War College in Washington now has under consideration an adaptation of the Aldershot system submitted by our Commission."

The cooperation expected between the camps and the neighboring communities takes on lines like these:

"We shall have an expert community organizer in every town or city in the neighborhood of all the camps in the United States, whose aim it will be to coordinate all the activities along this line. Just at present we have thirteen

of these trained men in the communities nearest the thirteen Officers' Reserve Camps now opening up. . . . .

"In some communities, for example, outside the camps, there will be 'canteens' for the soldiers run by women's organizations, where food and tobacco can be obtained at cost prices, and where an opportunity will be afforded for meeting and talking with women. In Toronto the 'Take the Soldier Home for Dinner Movement' was organized, and through this agency a number of men found homes which they could visit whenever they were on leave in the city. Work of this kind can be multiplied almost indefinitely.

"Too many of the evils surrounding camp life in the past are traceable to the lack of adequate amusement and rational recreation [for the soldier. Our Commission does not intend to attempt to apply impracticable idealistic standards. We shall be dealing with a fine lot of healthy, red-blooded men, and we must have healthy, red-blooded forms of recreation. My point is that there must be plenty of it to absorb the surplus energies of the soldiers in their hours of relaxation."

**OldMagazineArticles.com**