

luncheon: two ham sandwiches, one banana, two large cart-wheel cookies, and one pint of peanuts in a smaller bag inside, together with a large mug of lemonade. After luncheon these bags and the refuse are carefully collected and burned. At three o'clock in the afternoon the children are again called to the administration building, and in the same manner each child is given a piece of ice cream wrapped in paraffin paper, which dispenses with the need of spoons and dishes. At 3.45 they are again formed in procession and marched to the steamer, leaving the island at 4.15 and arriving in Boston at five o'clock. The total number of children taken upon the excursion this year was 13,846, at a per capita cost of 16c. There is but one paid attendant, the officer in charge. The Police Department furnishes an officer gratis, who accompanies all excursions from the wharf, and who preserves order and assists in the embarkation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now that the disagreeable part of my duty is over, it is with great pleasure that I will introduce a gentleman from Chicago who will speak on "The Relation of Playgrounds to Juvenile Delinquency."

Mr. Allen Burns.

RELATION OF PLAYGROUNDS TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

PAPER OF MR. ALLEN BURNS

In corresponding regarding this paper, the president of our Association wrote to this effect: "Many persons have theoretically maintained that parks and playgrounds are an important factor in the solution of the juvenile delinquency problem. But thus far no facts have been brought forward to support this contention. In your paper will you kindly give the first place to any facts which may bear upon this thesis?" Following our president's instructions, I have endeavored to collect and state a few cold facts, although it is much more difficult to present facts than to discuss theories and hypotheses in such a way as to interest and hold an audience. Consequently, you may be pre-

pared for a paper to which it may be hard to listen, but which contains, I trust, some figures important, if uninteresting. The unattractiveness of the discussion may be increased by it being necessary to give its substance as assembled and concentrated facts generally known as statistics. I realize that in using statistics I lay myself open not only to the charge of being uninteresting, but also to the charges based upon the principle that there are three degrees of lies: lies, — lies, and statistics.

I. LIMITATIONS, DEFINITIONS, AND METHODS

That we may perfectly understand each other, it is first necessary to state certain limitations and definitions adopted, and to describe briefly the method used in the preparation of this paper. The facts presented have all been gathered in Chicago, and a claim for the truth of the deductions from these facts is made primarily for Chicago. For two reasons this limitation was necessary. First, Chicago was the only place available for the writer, where for a sufficient length of time such records of juvenile delinquency have been kept as could be studied in close connection with the establishment and conduct of a comprehensive system of playgrounds; *i. e.*, playgrounds have been projected into a situation of stable conditions and uniform records. Second, the South Park Playgrounds of Chicago present a system, to use again the words of our president, "unparalleled in scope and equipment". So Chicago's experience ought to be good evidence on what generally may be the possible relations between playgrounds and juvenile delinquency.

The paper must also be confined to the juvenile delinquency of boys, inasmuch as the general inquiry making possible this paper has not yet been completed so far as girls are concerned, and furthermore the relation of playgrounds to girls has been presented in another paper before this congress.

In this discussion playgrounds are understood to embrace three classes of such recreation facilities. First, the large metropolitan parks common to our bigger cities, containing ball-grounds, football-fields, tennis-courts, facilities for rowing and wading, and large commons for general games. In most cases these parks have been long established and, while costing perhaps few hundred thousand dollars, could not now be replaced for many millions. Second, the small playgrounds, such as the ones conducted by the Special Park Commission of Chicago. They are

equipped with swings, sand piles, giant strides, some outdoor gymnasium apparatus, a basket ball court, teeters, and a small open space for such sports as do not require as large a field as baseball, football, and track games, except that one ground is large enough for the latter games. To construct and equip such a playground costs from \$10,000 to \$20,000, and the operating expenses for a year average \$1800. In the third place are the small parks conducted by the South Park Commission, which have been so generally described and discussed as not to need further comment before this body. They are the ones "unparalleled in scope and equipment", a typical one costing \$220,000 to construct and \$29,000 a year to maintain.

Juvenile delinquency as used in this paper does not assume to include all the boys whose deeds are reprehensible. It applies to that group of boys who have been apprehended in such wrongdoing as to bring them under the care of the Juvenile Court. The offenses accounting for most of these cases are, in the order of their frequency, stealing, incorrigibility, disorderly conduct, assault, and malicious mischief. Their ages range from seven to seventeen, the great majority, however, being more than eleven years old and the largest number of any age being between fifteen and sixteen.

The method in the preparation of this paper was a part of a general inquiry made last year by the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy into the social status and methods for the reformation and prevention of juvenile delinquents. This investigation was conducted by means of an appropriation from the Russell Sage Foundation, to which body acknowledgment is due for the facts contained in this study. This general inquiry considered the data furnished by all the cases brought into the Juvenile Court of Chicago in the first eight years of its history, from July 1, 1899, to June 30, 1907. These Court records, to be sure, supplied, as the only data pertinent to our subject, the location of the delinquents. In addition to the material furnished by the Court, however, all the cases for the fifth year, July 1, 1903, to June 30, 1904, were personally traced, their development noted, their family, economic, and social history ascertained, and from this mass of material have been selected such facts as relate to the question in hand.

An additional detail of the general method was especially useful for the purposes of this paper. Ninety per cent. of all the

cases for the first, fifth, and eighth years of the Court were indicated upon maps of the city by tacks placed in the blocks from which the delinquents came. The reason for placing only 90 per cent. of the cases upon these maps was that a map with as large a scale as was necessary for this work and covering the territory for 90 per cent. of the cases was as large a map as could be had that was practicable for use. Different colored tacks were used for the different years. By this device it was possible to determine exactly the distribution of juvenile delinquency and the geographical relation, at least, between juvenile delinquency and playgrounds. Besides, for the year specially investigated, all the successful cases were plotted on the same maps. By successful cases are meant those so improved as to be qualified for release from the jurisdiction of the Court. The statistics are compiled from actual counting of the cases on these maps for the different years, and thus it has been possible to determine the increase or decrease of delinquency and the percentage of successful cases in neighborhoods where the various kinds of playgrounds have existed or been introduced.

The writer is also under obligation to the park boards for information furnished through reports and statements of their officials.

Two other limitations should be borne in mind. First, the relation between playgrounds and delinquency can be, as the result of the method, only geographical except so far as the cases specially investigated furnished information based upon capable and reliable judgment. Second, the general inquiries reveal that there are two distinct classes of delinquents, the casual and the chronic. The chronic present the most difficult phases of the problem, and the importance of parental neglect and mental defectiveness as causes of delinquency leaves very little place in this class of cases for the influence of either the lack of or possession of playground facilities. Playgrounds, therefore, have their appreciable influence in the less difficult cases, that is to say, the casual, and must be considered as thus largely limited in their bearing upon the whole juvenile delinquency problem.

II. THESIS

With the above considerations understood, I propose to maintain the following thesis: The presence of parks and play-

grounds in a neighborhood is coincident with a decrease in the number of cases of juvenile delinquency and with an increase in the proportion of cases successfully cared for by the Court. Let me repeat: The presence of parks and playgrounds in a neighborhood is coincident with a decrease of cases successfully cared for by the Court. The three kinds of parks and playgrounds will be separately considered.

1. *Large Parks.*—You will recall that by large parks are meant the parks of the kind most common and longest established in our cities, and which, no matter how important in this connection, cannot be increased in numbers in the districts from which most delinquents come. For Chicago, it cannot be said that there is less delinquency in the neighborhood of such parks than in other neighborhoods where other things are equal. There are no other neighborhoods in Chicago where other things are equal. The large parks are in the districts of least congestion, more intelligent parenthood, greater protection from police interference, fewer mothers compelled to leave children in order to find them bread, fathers having more time with their families, more yards and other recreation facilities provided, more varied educational agencies, and a quicker detection of defectiveness. In these neighborhoods delinquency is scarcer in common with most undesirable external factors in life, and as a result of this scarcity and of the presence of desirable features, among which are the parks. Inasmuch as these parks are involved with so many other good influences, and as they have not been established within a period in which special study of juvenile delinquency has been made, it is impossible to say how much such parks account for the scarcity of juvenile delinquency in their neighborhoods. There is no such basis for comparison as if one such large park had been established in a neighborhood during the period for which juvenile delinquency statistics could be obtained. You may have your opinion as to the influence of such parks in this connection, as I have mine, but the writer's instructions were to stick to facts.

We are not quite so much at a loss in reckoning the contribution of such parks to the successful care of cases by the court. While for the whole city, 39 per cent. of the cases are successful, the proportion of successful cases within one mile of each of the six large parks to the total cases in the same areas is 46 per cent. It still might be said that these cases would have improved

anyway because of the large number of other helpful agencies surrounding them, but many of the cases in this 46 per cent. were those which moved into the vicinity of these large parks after the child was first declared a delinquent. And probation officers and parents have recognized the park as an important element in the child's improvement. Here is a typical case: This boy at nine years of age was brought into court on a charge of stealing and committed to an institution for a short term. A year later he was again arrested for incorrigibility, but left under care of the officer to whom he had been paroled from the institution. Three years after the second arrest he was again brought into Court for incorrigibility and committed to the institution where the less hopeful cases are sent. After his release his family moved from a neighborhood entirely destitute of recreation facilities to a location near Lincoln Park, which the boy has since used constantly as the place for spending his leisure. He has improved sufficiently to be released from court and causes no further trouble. Such cases as this, of which there are many, indicate that the better showing of park neighborhoods as to successful cases is due, in part at least, to the parks themselves. Thus we have in the matter of successful cases a possible index of the park's influence as we could not have where there was no opportunity to measure the decrease of delinquency in connection with the establishment of the park.

2. *Municipal Playgrounds.*—You will remember that these playgrounds are the small ones conducted by the Special Park Commission and generally without the facilities for such athletic games as are most attractive to the boys of the age of those who come into the Juvenile Court. While twelve such playgrounds are maintained, only seven can be considered in the study of the increase or decrease of delinquency between the years 1900 and 1904, because of the varying dates of their establishment. And only six, some included in the above seven and some not, can be considered in the study of the period from 1900 to 1907, for the reason given above and for the additional reason that three of these playgrounds are so close to the new small parks as not to have a separately distinguishable influence. It is hard to determine the territory over which these playgrounds should be expected to have an influence. Mr. Theodore A. Gross, supervisor of these playgrounds, estimates that 71 per cent. of the attendants reside within one-quarter of a mile and 90 per cent. within one-half

a mile. Taking each of these radii of efficiency, what answer is given to the question as to the effect of these playgrounds on delinquency? It is necessary to consider all these playground areas together, as to take one single area of one-half mile diameter gives too small a territory to be used for statistical purposes.

Between the years 1900 and 1904 there was a decrease in juvenile delinquency for the whole city of 29 per cent. Within the one-quarter mile radii of efficiency of the seven playgrounds established within this period there was a decrease of only 9 per cent. Taking the one-half mile radii the decrease was 8 per cent.

Apparently there was a 20 per cent. less decrease in the playground neighborhoods than in the city as a whole. But it is unfair to draw conclusions as to the relation of these playgrounds to delinquency from a comparison of the year 1899-1900 with the year 1903-1904. The practices of the Court changed so much in the first year of this period, and the first year so much antedates the opening of the playgrounds as to account for this unfavorable showing in the playground neighborhoods. To draw fair conclusions it would be necessary to compare the year after these changes in Court practice, which is also the year immediately preceding the establishment of these playgrounds, with a year some time after these playgrounds had been in operation, *i. e.*, the year 1900-1901 with the year 1903-1904. This the maps as prepared do not permit.

It is estimated that if a comparison for the whole city and for the playgrounds of the years 1901 and 1904 could have been made, the decrease in each case would have been about 9 per cent. This would indicate that these playgrounds have had at least no appreciable immediate effect upon the juvenile delinquency within their possible radii of efficiency.

Let us now consider the playgrounds which enter into the situation in the period from 1900 to 1907. The city as a whole showed a decrease of 18 per cent. between these two years. The playgrounds show a decrease of 24 per cent. when their radius of efficiency is taken as one-quarter mile, but where the radius is taken as one-half mile, they show an increase in delinquency in these areas of over 10 per cent. against the general decrease in the city of 18 per cent. Evidently the radius of efficiency so far as juvenile delinquency is concerned is less than one-half mile.

One further question as to the playgrounds. Have they any relation to the successful cases? Recall that the city as a whole shows 39 per cent. of the cases to be successful. Within the one-quarter mile radii of these playgrounds only 29 per cent. of the cases are successful, and within the one-half mile radii only 32 per cent.

Except for one figure, these playgrounds have had no apparent effect either in reducing juvenile delinquency or in contributing to the successful care of the delinquent. This is not surprising in view of the equipment of these playgrounds and the fact that they attract largely the boys younger than those who come into Juvenile Court. Yet it might be expected that in the long run the children having in their younger years the opportunity of these playgrounds would have greater chance to develop without becoming juvenile delinquents. This is borne out by the fact that when we take into consideration the long period from 1900 to 1907, and the smaller areas in which these playgrounds are possibly effective, it appears that juvenile delinquency has decreased 24 per cent., while delinquency for the whole city has decreased only 18 per cent. This seems to be the one point in which there is no relation between the small playgrounds and the decrease of delinquency.

3. *Small Parks.*—The small parks of Chicago's South Side are of especial interest in this discussion both because they have become such objects of general knowledge and interest, and because they were projected into the juvenile delinquency problem at a time when juvenile delinquency had been under careful observation for several years and the methods of treatment had become fairly fixed and uniform. In other words, in so far as these small parks entered as the only variant into situations where conditions were practically stable, any great variation in the juvenile delinquency could be more closely connected with the establishment of the small parks. One drawback in studying this connection is that the majority of these small parks were established in neighborhoods where the population has changed and increased greatly since the opening of these centers and the court has given additional attention. This is not true for all these small parks, however. Another difficulty is that it is hard to determine over how large an area these small parks can be expected to exert an influence. The South Park authorities are working upon an exact radius of efficiency, upon the

completion of which further figures as to the relation of these parks to delinquency will have to be compiled. These officials agree, however, that if these parks have any influence at all, it must be shown by taking a one-half mile radius of efficiency.

Before considering the comparatively small neighborhoods within such a radius, there are interesting figures for a much larger area. For the first five years of the Juvenile Court, the South Side furnished a practically uniform percentage of the total juvenile delinquents in the city. At the same time and for the succeeding three years of the Court, the population of the South Side maintained a constant proportion to that of the whole city, and was given a constantly proportionate amount of attention by the Juvenile Court and its officers. It is then most significant that while in the first year of the Court and still in the fifth year, the South Side furnished approximately 40 per cent. of all the delinquents in the city, two years after the opening of the small parks, and at the end of the eighth year of the court's work, the South Side furnished only 34 per cent. of the city's juvenile offenders. To put it in another way—after the small parks had been operating for two years, the South Side alone showed a decrease in delinquency of 17 per cent. relative to the delinquency of the whole city, while the rest of the city had increased its delinquency 12 per cent., a showing in favor of the South Side of a difference of 29 per cent. upon the supposition that without the small parks the South Side would have continued to furnish its due quota of court wards as compared with the rest of the city.

But to consider somewhat more restricted areas and ask where this decrease occurred. The South Side is divided into eleven probation districts, over each of which a probation officer is placed. Within reach of the children of each of districts 2½, 6, 8, and 9 at least two small parks have been established, and these districts may be said now to have somewhere nearly adequate play facilities. District 9 has a rapidly increasing population in a part of it farthest away from the small parks, yet this district shows a decrease in delinquency of 28 per cent. during the period when the delinquency for the whole city increased 11 per cent. Districts 6 and 8 may be taken together as a common neighborhood into which three small parks have been projected; here, too, the population has been rapidly increasing, and yet for the period under consideration these districts show

a decrease of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. District $2\frac{1}{2}$ may be said to be one in which conditions have remained the most nearly uniform, and shows a decrease in delinquency of 70 per cent. All of these districts lie around the stock-yards, a part of Chicago supposed to be the hardest to improve, but the part of both Chicago and the South Side which has been most adequately supplied with play facilities. Taken as a whole, it shows a decrease of 44 per cent. during the period in which the small parks have been open and the delinquency for the whole city increased 11 per cent.

As suggested above, only three of these small parks are so located that the area within a one-half mile radius can be said to furnish such continuously uniform conditions that it is fair to estimate the effect of these parks upon juvenile delinquency. Taking these three areas together, they show a decrease of 28.5 per cent. It is interesting to note that two of these areas overlap very largely three of the playground areas of which it has been said that their effect upon juvenile delinquency between the years 1904 and 1907 could not be measured because of such overlapping. Giving these playgrounds a one-quarter mile radius of efficiency, they show in this alliance with the small parks a decrease of 50 per cent. from the year 1900 to 1907, and given a one-half mile radius, a decrease of 39 per cent.

To turn now to the relation of these small parks to the successful care of wards by the court. We can here consider the eleven small parks within a one-half mile radius of which the maps show cases of juvenile delinquency to have occurred. These areas show a proportion of successful cases varying from 33 per cent. to 100 per cent. For the areas taken together, the proportion of successful cases is 46 per cent. compared with 39 per cent., the proportion for the whole city, a showing of 7 per cent. in favor of the districts within one-half mile of the small parks. The South Side, taken as a whole, does not have any advantage over the rest of the city in its percentage of successful cases. It holds its own.

To sum up the case for the small parks, and the playgrounds and the large parks as well. A small park, such as those on the South Side of Chicago, can be expected to be coincident with a decrease of delinquency within a radius of one-half mile of 28.5 per cent., conditions of the neighborhood in other respects remaining stable. To provide a probation district with adequate play facilities is coincident with a reduction in delinquency of

from 28 per cent. to 70 per cent., or 44 per cent. as an average. In addition, over a much larger area the small parks have a tendency to decrease delinquency 17 per cent. Remembering that the small park areas made only a 7 per cent. better showing in the matter of successful cases than the rest of the city, it may be said that the small parks have been a greater factor in the prevention than in the reformation of the juvenile delinquent. For the playgrounds, the only indication of a helpful influence is the fact that in the long run and in the neighborhood very close to the playground, children seem to be so developed that a decrease of delinquency results—a decrease of 24 per cent. for such neighborhoods as compared with 18 per cent. for the whole city. There was no way of measuring the effect of the large parks upon the decrease of delinquency. They did show a helpful influence in the successful treatment of delinquents, there being 46 per cent. of successful cases within a one-mile radius. This is the same favorable showing of 7 per cent., as made by the small parks in a one-half mile radius. Upon these figures is rested the case for the thesis that the presence of parks and playgrounds in a neighborhood is coincident with a decrease of cases of juvenile delinquency and with an increase in the proportion of cases successfully cared for by the Court.

Last spring I was walking through a neighborhood a mile and a half from any playground. It was Saturday afternoon and the big boys home from work were playing ball and so had driven the youngsters from the only vacant lot left for play in the district. The "kids" had betaken themselves to the street, and one of them in his sport had his back to an approaching team. The driver, thinking his confines also had been trespassed upon, warned and reprimanded the boy at the same time by a cut from the lash of a long whip. The lad's cry of rage and resentment told of a very conscious sense of wrong and disinheritance which would be discharged along with the energy pent up by the loss of play opportunity. It was not hard to imagine that this combination would take slight account of whether its expression transgressed the law. It was a typical situation from which juvenile delinquency resulted so far as caused by lack of playgrounds. Again, on the 27th of last May, I stood in the Juvenile Court of Manhattan, and saw a boy arraigned for the enormity of making use of the public streets for a game of "cat," consisting of seeing how far he could knock a small stick pointed at both

ends. For this offense the Judge charged the boy with being as dangerous to society as are tigers and lions at large, and warned him that for a repetition he would receive the same treatment as these beasts. I submit that these two boys were more sinned against than sinning, and that they are typical of the juvenile delinquents whose cases have been adequately cared for, either by prevention or reformation through the establishment of suitable playgrounds, and we all prefer this kind of treatment rather than that for tigers and lions.

But there are citizens who will think of the cost of the small park—\$220,000 to establish and \$29,000 per year to maintain—the cost of \$1.76 for establishment and 23 cents per year for maintenance to the property holder of \$10,000. Ten times these amounts for the South Side of Chicago. And this thoughtful citizen may add that the South Side's 29 per cent. favorable showing represents only about one hundred bad boys saved. As a problem in "efficient democracy," I suggest that such patriots of the exchequer consider the cost to the public treasury of handling each case of juvenile delinquency. I hoped to be able to make such a comparison for Chicago, but the accounts of the county were not so kept as to make this practicable within the available time. I do not presume, however, that the cost of caring for delinquents would equal that of preventing them through the establishment of small parks. The approach of the former to the latter expense might be some solace to those who must make money the first consideration.

There is another point of view which maintains that no matter how great the cost, the value of the saved boy is inestimably beyond it. This point of view is suggested by that Master of practical life who knew full well the value of money, even of the widow's mite. For what shall it profit a city if it gain the whole world and lose the souls of its children?

THE CHAIRMAN: I take great pleasure in introducing Mrs. Heller, of the Douglas County movement of Omaha, who will speak on "The Playground as a Phase of Social Reform."