

national politics. Science shows the same rhythm in its development. A period of specialization—of relative isolation—secures to each set of natural phenomena a chance to develop on its own account, without being lost in, or obscured by generalities or a mass of details. But the time comes when the limit of movement in this direction is reached, and it is necessary to devote ourselves to tracing the threads of connection which unite the different specialized branches into a coherent and consecutive whole. At present the most active sciences seem to be spelled with a hyphen; it is astro-physics, stereo-chemistry, psycho-physics, and so on.

This is not a movement of blind action and reaction. One tendency is the necessary completion of the other. A certain degree of isolation or detachment is required to secure the unhindered and mature development of any group of forces. It is necessary in order to master them in their practical workings. We have to divide to conquer. But when the proper degree of individualization is reached, we need to bring one thing to bear upon another in order to realize upon the benefits which may be derived from the period of isolation. The sole object of the separation is to serve as a means to the end of more effective interaction.

Now as to the bearings of this abstract piece of philosophy upon our school problems. The school system is a historic evolution. It has a tradition and a movement of its own. Its roots run back into the past and may be traced

through the strata of the successive centuries. It has an independence, a dignity of its own comparable to that of any other institution. In this twenty-five-hundred-year-old development it has, of necessity, taken on its individuality at the expense of a certain isolation. Only through this isolation has it been disentangled from absorption in other institutions: the family, the Government, the Church, and so on. This detachment has been a necessity in order that it might become a true division of labor and thus perform most efficiently the service required of it.

But there are disadvantages as well as advantages. Attention has come to be concentrated upon the affairs of the school system as if they concerned simply the system itself, and had only a very indirect reference to other social institutions. The school teacher often resents reference to outside contacts and considerations as if they were indeed outside—simply interferences. There can be no doubt that in the last two centuries much more thought and energy have been devoted to shaping the school system into an effective mechanism within itself than to securing its due interaction with family life, the Church, commerce, or political institutions.

But, having secured this fairly adequate and efficient machine, the question which is coming more and more to the front is: What shall we do with it? How shall we secure from it the services, the fruits, which alone justify the expense of money, time, and thought in building up the machine?