

And at the same time there are strong forces at work to widen very greatly the scope of the State-governed school. Many things which were once left to the care of the home, the farm and the shop are now being handed over to the school, partly, we are told, for the purpose of making the school more real. One should not be charged with being a pessimist if he has fears that the school may not be able to bear the new burdens which so-called progressive educationists desire to place on its shoulders. The day may come when true progress in education will be considered the synonym of simplification and not of complication, as is the case now.

The idea that the school is a microcosm in which all the activities of the great macrocosm outside shall be mimicked, may, if persisted in by enthusiasts, involve the destruction of all useful education. If every child at the age of entering school shall have to declare what profession he intends to pursue so that he may receive his proper vocational training, then will the system break down under the weight of inherent folly. But the good sense of plain people will perhaps intervene to prevent such exaggeration of madness, if in no other way than by the stoppage of supplies. State schools seem to be necessary, but they should be kept simple.

If we pass over some important services, more or less well done by municipalities and the nation, such as sanitation, supply of water, etc., we come to the one branch of national administration in modern times which may be considered as reasonably successful, i.e., the Post-Office. And it is worth while to reflect on the success of this department, for therein we may catch a clue to guide us in the labyrinth of discussion in which we are engaged. The postal service is in its essentials a fairly simple one. It demands in officials no very great technical skill. It asks for orderliness, promptness and honesty, which fortunately are qualities which one may regard as possible to secure.

And it is dangerous to argue, as is sometimes done, that because the transportation of letters is well managed by the State, the carriage of freight in packages of all sizes plus the conveyance of living creatures through all kinds of distances may be equally well managed by a government office. It is true that such things are in many countries under State control, but usually there is much less unanimity of opinion as to the success of government management in their case than in the case of the Post-Office. In Canada our State management of railroads has not been a brilliant achievement, and yet we are on the point of adding an enormous mileage to our national railway system. It would not be a surprising thing if in no remote future we should have cause for profound regret that our Government ever became so deeply involved in such enterprises.

For be it observed that the functions of railways have been very much extended. They now comprise not only the transportation of passengers and freight comparatively short distances by land, but for long distances in alien countries, and by sea as well as land, including entertainment in vast hotels. The Minister of Railways will have charge of a large army of engineers, conductors, stevedores, waiters, cooks, stewards, sailors and so on, often perhaps alien, or if not such, all (male and female) having votes well organized to determine who the Minister himself is to be. The man who believes that this office will be successfully filled has more than a proper share of optimism in his constitution.

Some twenty years ago a wave of strong feeling passed over this continent, which found expression in a striking phrase, "The Public Ownership of Public Utilities." It became fashionable to say harsh things of the Boards of Directors and Managers of gas companies, street railways and the like. Prospective mayors and aldermen found it hard to be elected