

This extensive wastage has long occasioned dissatisfaction and criticism, which has now crystallized in definite reconstruction. The motivation of this separate education organization may be grouped under four headings:—

- (1.) Necessity of stopping the early mortality of pupils.
- (2.) Demand for adequate vocational guidance of pupils.
- (3.) Demand for more scientific provision for the distinctive needs of adolescence.
- (4.) Desire to economize school time and make the curriculum bear directly on the practical needs of life.

The consensus of expert opinion ascribes the heavy driftage of pupils not to economic pressure but to deadness of curricular content. Hence this functional reorganization has been scientifically designed in order that the junior-high-school period of education may be correlated as a distinctive unit with a parallel physiological and psychic stage in the pupil's development. The old organization of the school system disregarded the urgent psychical needs of the preadolescent stage, and consequently bred mental apathy, resulting in loss of pupils. The prepubescent period (six years to twelve) is that of childhood, susceptible to drill, formal discipline, and the fixation of habits. This is the period of mechanical training, the age for the teaching of the fundamental processes, the clearly defined period of elementary education.

It is at the termination of this stage that the period of adolescence or youth supervenes. Scientific research has conclusively shown that fundamental differences in physical and mental constitution are observable at the average age of twelve years, the stage at which the pupil enters the 7th Grade in America and Standard V in New Zealand. The 7th Grade rather than the 9th is now recognized as the natural turning-point in the pupil's life. At the opening of the 7th Grade pupils are already showing their dawning tastes and aptitudes. Under the old regime the last two years of elementary education were spent in reviews and amplifications of memorizing work which to the pupil was devoid of purpose and interest, and bred in him mental nausea. The dawn of social consciousness in him brings with it a new host of interests and a new stage of emotional life. The tools of education can be thoroughly acquired by the age of twelve, and then the adolescent period craves a meatier diet, rich in social, civic, and vocational interests. The retention of pupils is absolutely dependent upon the provision of these interests and the educational equipment for development of the pupil's motor activities. The old deadening routine of the 7th and 8th Grades, which was responsible for the elimination of so many pupils, has now disappeared. Practical teachers who have had a life-time experience with pupils of the upper grades have been almost unanimous in approving the change limiting the period of elementary education to the six grades (corresponding to New Zealand Standards 1 to IV), instituting a junior-high-school or intermediate stage of secondary education for the next three years (Grades 7 to 9), and continuing with a three-years programme (Grades 10 to 12) of higher secondary work in the senior high school before approaching the university.

There is then a distinct point of pedagogic departure at the age of twelve. After this age a continuation of the conventional grade programme breeds mental apathy and inertia. A new phase of intense curiosity ushers in the adolescent period, and here we need a new programme full of educational activities and enriched with vocational interests. The pupil's budding capacities and aptitudes should be tried out over a large range of practical interests, not only for the purpose of holding him at school, but to enable him through self-discovery to ascertain his vocational bent, to locate that sphere of work in which all his energies and interests are willingly enlisted, and so to gain that sense of confidence and of social usefulness which will strengthen his self-respect and react generally on his character.

It is in pursuance of this aim that the junior high school has been established with its own distinctive atmosphere and curriculum. The innovation is a conscious endeavour, now that the pupil has acquired the tools of education in the elementary school, to arouse and foster his special talents and abilities, and to develop such to the fullest possible extent by a vocationalized programme without prejudicing his general educational equipment. Consequently the differentiation of curricula is a vital point. This new educational departure recognizes fully the democratic need of developing in each individual the interests, habits, aptitudes, and powers whereby he will function most usefully in social service and at the same time develop best his own personality.

BROAD FEATURES OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION.

By general consent, then, in America the primary or elementary stage of education is determined at the average age of twelve years, for sound physiological, psychical, and sociological reasons. At this age a fundamental difference in characteristics is observable, although the transition to puberty is almost imperceptible in its stages. Stanley Hall's well-known description of the oncoming of pubertal modification as "saltatory" is not now upheld. It is at this age that the machinery of transition to secondary education should be put in operation. At this age comes the natural termination of uniformity of schooling. The pre-pubescent and pubertal changes demand corresponding curricular adaptations, and the pupil should now enter upon a stage of education characterized by a rich differentiation of subject-matter. The dawn of adolescence must be scientifically recognized, both in content of programme and in methods of instruction. The school now makes a scientific cleavage between the receptive period of automatic response and that of the larger motor activities. The secondary course is practically devised for social service and economic efficiency, and is based upon the experience of the civilized world about the school. It is directly adapted to meet the dominant needs and ideals of society which comprise economic, civic, and domestic efficiency. The old academic routine of formal discipline has been definitely jettisoned from the secondary system.