THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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PREFACE

The author is frank to admit that this book is not a complete treatise on the junior high school. To write such a treatise there would have to be available a vast mass of facts, statistics, and experimental data about the subject. The junior high school is too new an institution to have had time and opportunity for the accumulation of such scientific material. There has been an insistent demand for a reorganization of our school system. It did not seem as if those demands could be met under the 8-4 plan of grouping grades. There arose—in response to the demand—a new institution, the junior high school, created to carry out the reorganization.

It was not as if an old institution had been asked to do new work. Not at all. It was pretty well decided beforehand what was needed to be done. The problem was, can the present organizations do the things needed? Some educators said, yes. Others said, no, and proceeded to create a new school to do the work. Since then Professor Johnston's statement that "the junior high school movement is sweeping the country" has become literally true.

There have been some precedents in Europe and in this country for the creation of this school. These fore-runners are briefly described by the author. It is not pretended, however, that these were real junior high schools.

This book is put forth as a guide for the study of the junior high school movement. It is full of suggestions, full of arguments, full of enthusiastic hopes. It is put forth as a pathfinder. The author has necessarily drawn largely on his personal observations in his own schools at Pomona; but

he has also had the pleasure of visiting the junior high schools in Los Angeles, Berkeley, Detroit, Houston, and Salt Lake City.

The author wishes to thank the many superintendents who have responded to his requests for information. He wishes especially to thank Dr. David P. Barrows, formerly Dean of the Faculties of the University of California, now Major, Chief of the Intelligence Department, Philippine Islands, and Prof. E. E. Lewis and Prof. T. H. Briggs, of Teachers' College, Columbia, for valuable suggestions, criticism and inspiration. For faults in the book the author wishes himself solely and alone to be held responsible.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEMS AND THE SOLUTION

1. **Definition of Junior High School and Outline of the Subject:** A junior high school in the fullest sense in which it is commonly used has the following characteristics:

(a) It is a separate educational institution, with a distinct organization and corps of officers and teachers.

(b) It embraces the seventh, eighth and ninth grades (or years of work) and sometimes the tenth.

(c) It has a curriculum in the seventh and eighth grades enriched by the presence of several high school subjects or by the broadening, culturizing or vocationalizing of the so-called common branches.

(d) It promotes by subject even in the seventh and eighth grades.

(e) It permits and encourages a differentiation of courses for the different pupils.

It is with the above meaning that the term will be used in this book. Many schools that fall short of all these characteristics by one point are called junior high schools. But in practically all cities where the movement for establishing these schools has gotten well under way, the ideal toward which the authorities are working embraces all of these points.

In California the term originally used was "intermediate high school," later shortened to "intermediate school," but the term "junior high school" is rapidly supplanting the others. In New York City the "intermediate school" is not properly a secondary school, although it is tending to become such.

The reader must bear in mind that the junior high school movement is so new and is undergoing so many modifications and improvements that what is true of it this year may fall far short of the truth next year.

The subject of the junior high school will be treated first as an educational movement, and second as an institution. In the first division we shall treat, in this chapter, the causes leading to the birth of the movement; in the second chapter, the history of the movement; in the third chapter, the objections raised to the creation of a junior high school; in the fourth chapter, the ascertained and prospective effects of the movement upon the elementary school.

In the second division—the school as an institution—we shall devote chapters V and VI to the curriculum and courses of study; chapter VII to the preparation, selection and organization of faculties; chapter VIII to problems of teaching; chapter IX to administration; chapter X to the relation of the junior high school as an institution to the senior high school; and chapter XI to the author's conception of an ideal environment, housing, equipment, and officering of a junior high school.

In this chapter we shall take up the causes that produced the junior high school movement. We shall find that society has made certain demands on the public schools with which the school system found it impossible under the 8-4 organization successfully to cope. The junior high school came into existence to meet these demands. The four most important demands were: (1) That the enormous leakage from school in the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth grades cease; (2) That an effort be made to destroy the influences of schools which tend to send young men and women into unsuitable and worthless vocations and that a positive effort be made to guide them into suitable and worthy occupa-

tions; (3) That the modern tendency to lengthen the period of preparation for skilled vocations be checked and some method be found for shortening the period so that men may become self-supporting and society-supporting at an earlier age; and, finally (4) That the school system check the physical, mental and moral evils that accompany and grow out of adolescence.

After showing how bad were the conditions that caused these demands to be made, we shall proceed to explain how these demands are being met by the junior high school.

2. **The Problems. A. Leakage in the seventh and eighth grades and in high school.** The records in Los Angeles City, where compulsory attendance is more strictly enforced than in most cities, show that in the years 1896 to 1911, inclusive, there was an average dropping out, as follows: From the fifth grade, 18 per cent of those registered in that grade; from the sixth grade, 20 per cent; from the seventh, 30 per cent; from the eighth, 17 per cent. As the eighth was the last grade of the elementary school, the dropping out after graduation would greatly increase the percentage above the 17 per cent here recorded. The law required children to attend school up to the fifteenth birthday; but there was a large number of Mexican children who reached that age in the fifth and sixth grades. The statistics of Los Angeles do not show how many dropped out at the end of the eighth grade; but in Grand Rapids 24 per cent of eighth-grade graduates failed to enter the ninth grade, and in Evansville, Indiana, 44 per cent. In the Franklin School of Berkeley, California, 59 per cent of eighth-grade graduates did not enter high school.

Thorndike's statistics show that for the country in general, out of every 100 pupils finishing the sixth grade only

79 finish the seventh and only 59 finish the eighth. Ayres' figures show 79 and 57, respectively.

As to leakage in high school, the record in Cincinnati showed that of the 1766 pupils enrolled in the ninth grade in 1912-13, only 1128 enrolled in the tenth grade the next year, and 714 in the eleventh grade in the following year. This shows a loss of 36.1 per cent the first year and 23.5 per cent the second year. The leakage in the tenth grade, however, was 36.7 per cent of those that entered it. The statistics of Los Angeles from 1896 to 1911 show that 54 per cent of those who entered the high school dropped out before the end of the first year; and of those who remained to take up the tenth grade, 45 per cent dropped out before the end of the year. The Minneapolis report showed similar results.

Thorndike's figures for the entire country show that between the end of the eighth year and the end of the ninth, out of every 100 pupils 33 dropped out, and during the next year 25 more dropped out. Ayres' statistics show that out of every 100 graduates of the eighth grade 22 dropped out in the ninth grade and 42 in the tenth. While these accounts differ in detail, in final result they agree that about 60 per cent of elementary-school graduates fail to reach the third year of high school.

B. Selecting the wrong vocation in life. Another social problem that presses for solution is that of getting each person into the occupation that will serve best his own interests and those of society. The good of both the individual and of society requires that boys and girls find at a reasonably early age the vocation for which they are best adapted and that all preparation possible be made for that occupation.

There is a large number of failures in business attributable

to the unfitness of the employer and the employees for carrying on that business. In 1915 there were 22,156 such business failures in this country. There are other contributory causes, of course, but unfitness stands out as a principal one. The vast armies of idle poor that hang about city employment offices testify to the failures in fitting for the right employment. Competent authorities state that a large proportion of men change their occupations two or three times before they get into the right ones. If a man does not decide upon his vocation until he reaches twenty-five or thirty years of age, he has only natural aptitude to rely on; he has not time then to prepare himself adequately for an occupation.

Not only is the misfit unsuccessful in the occupation into which he is driven, but he finds it irksome. He is unhappy in his work. This unhappiness and poor remuneration affect his family relationship, disturbing its equilibrium and bringing about pessimism and distress. Society also finds itself cheated out of what it expects and demands of each individual. It may even have to support the individual or his family and is thereby burdened with pathological and curative measures—a condition that prevents the carrying out of its creative and developmental program. Society feels the loss of such a man's monetary contribution to its progress.

C. **Delayed entrance into skilled vocations.** We hear in these days a constant complaint of the system of schooling that prevents young men from getting started in their professions or occupations until late in their twenties. With twelve years for public education, four for college, and three for professional training in the university, a man finds himself ready to begin work at twenty-five years of age if he has been fortunate. If, however, he failed to pass

some lower grade; if his parents moved from one state to another, or from one city to another, entailing a loss of a grade; if he did not enter school until he was seven years old; or if sickness or other causes interrupted his steady advance in school, he will not finish his university work until he is twenty-six or twenty-seven. It takes so long to get a start in the professions or in business, that often he is well past thirty before he finds himself self-supporting. All these things tend to delay marriage to middle age, and sometimes entirely prevent it. If, by misfortune, the young man should marry in his early twenties, he is condemned to such cruel privations and struggles that his chances for success are slim.

This is true not only in the professions, but equally so in many lines of agriculture. Orchards require several years to mature, and farms cannot be stocked short of three or four years. If the young man has neither the land nor the capital to start farming as soon as he is graduated from the university, he will find that he must wait several years longer before his education will yield him any permanent income. Most young men, foreseeing this long delay, go directly into agriculture without taking a university course at all.

D. **Evils growing out of adolescence.** These are of three kinds though closely inter-related. The physical evils result from (a) arrested development, caused by some disease, from overstudy, fright, etc.; (b) perverted sex habits, as self-abuse; (c) habits arising out of the adolescent's sudden induction into manhood which gives him the adult's desires and freedom to satisfy them but not the adult's restraining will power, such as the habit of keeping late hours, smoking, chewing tobacco, drinking liquor, eating rapidly, and choosing irregular diet; (d) a reaching and

straining to do things that their elders do, without proper judgment, such as running endurance races; and (e) improper actions by girls at delicate bodily periods and neglect of bodily needs through a prudish sense of modesty.

There are several mental evils that grow out of adolescence: (a) Arrested mental development caused by the physical changes incident to adolescence or caused by worry over those changes; (b) mental weakness caused by excessive indulgence in sex thoughts and habits; (c) habits arising out of the adolescent's sudden induction into manhood which gives him freedom to do much as he pleases, such habits as idleness, irregularity in work, fickleness, weakness of will; (d) mental stagnation resulting from the youth's leaving school and entering unskilled work; (e) the "bighead," contempt for the opinions of others, unwillingness to learn, a feeling of "knowing it all."

The moral evils are more definite and far-reaching. Many writers insist that they are actually worse now than ever before and are steadily getting worse. The following are some of those moral evils arising directly from adolescence: (a) Lying to parents and weaving webs of deceit; (b) disobedience to parents and general outlawry against the home; (c) playing "hookey" from school, cutting classes, chafing against restraints of any kind; (d) habits arising out of the freedom and independence that come with adolescence, such as the reading of trashy novels, frequenting bad moving picture houses, smoking, gambling, drinking, staying out late at night, indulging in excessive social affairs, stealing to meet the unusual need for spending money; (e) perverted sex habits (ranging from mere "looseness" of actions to downright "shamelessness").

3. **Preventing Leakage by the junior high school.** The leakage in the seventh and eighth grades is attributed to several causes, of which dislike for school as taught under

the old plan is the principal one. This dislike for school arose from the fact that the pupils were tired of going over and over the common-school studies, that they disliked to associate with the little children who had no community of interest with them, and that they wanted some real, telling work to do, work which was to be found only outside the walls of school. There were, of course, other contributing causes. Many children had to go to work to help support their families, and they felt that the longer they stayed in the old-time school the less fit they were for taking the small jobs which children can readily secure.

This leakage in the seventh and eighth grades the junior high schools were organized to check. They plan to reduce the dropping out of school by keeping children interested in school work. The common branches, if taught at all in these two grades, are to be so effectively changed in nature that the pupils will not recognize in them their old enemies. If arithmetic appears at all, it is as elementary accounts, bookkeeping or commercial arithmetic. If it is served to them in this way, the boys and girls enjoy the feast. Other subjects are added—subjects that appeal to the ambition of the young people. The two grades are taken from the grammar school building and housed in new quarters where the pupils will have only children of their own ages or older children to associate with. The real, telling work of the big outside world is brought into these new schools, and the youngsters have their legitimate ambitions satisfied in school work. Finally, the junior high schools are being so conducted as to make it possible for boys to help the parents, as in Los Angeles, either by part-time work in stores or by selling the product of their manual training or school-gardening work.

We have available some statistical records of the influence

of the junior high school in retaining pupils in school. Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a city in which school attendance was kept up to a very high standard even before the institution of the junior high school. The following statistics are taken from an article by Paul C. Stetson in the April, 1918, SCHOOL REVIEW, but arranged by the author so as to show the facts which he wishes to bring out. His figures show that the elementary school enrollment remained practically stationary from 1908 to 1916, the increase being almost entirely in grades VIII to XII, inclusive. He states that the junior high schools were established in 1912. Not all seventh and eighth grade pupils were at once assigned to the junior high schools. The enrollment in the seventh grade remained about the same until 1913, when it began to grow by leaps and bounds after feeling the effects of the junior high school upon it. The eighth grade had hardly been able to hold its own until 1914, when the effect of the junior high school began to be felt. Here are the figures. We have underlined the figures where the junior high school's influence is felt.

	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade
1908	1091	946
1909	1087	1039
1910	1063	1053
1911	1161	992
1912	1082	1072
1913	1262	990
1914	1188	1140
1915	1272	1097
1916	1346	1296

The next case to which we wish to refer is that of Macomb, Illinois, as reported by Superintendent V. L.