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## Time for Cooperation

THERE has never been a time in the history of American education when the schools have not been subjected to criticism. The philosophy, objectives, methods, and all other aspects of our educational system, from earliest schooling through advanced training, have from time to time been under attack from various individuals and groups. Probably no one would question that education at every level has always been capable of improvement. Although much criticism has been purely destructive, the effects of censoriousness have been sufficiently offset by constructive suggestions so that the appraising scrutiny focused upon our schools and their products has, on the whole, been salutary. Only that criticism which is based on such objective data as may be available is likely to be effective in improving the undesirable trends, practices, and conditions that may at any time exist. Starting from known facts is the scientific method of solving problems; this method is as effective in solving educational problems as in solving those of all other fields.

For more than ten years the AAAS has sponsored a Cooperative Committee on the Teaching of Science and Mathematics, the function of which is to seek solutions of important problems that affect the teaching in these two major fields. The Committee is made up of representatives of sixteen scientific organizations. The representatives are university and college teachers of science and mathematics, and in the membership are included three who are now secondary school administrators and a number of university specialists in the teaching of science or mathematics. Because of its broad representation, the Cooperative Committee would seem to be an appropriate agency for bringing together scientists and educators to consider the teaching of science and mathematics in our schools and colleges in a study sponsored jointly by the AAAS and professional education societies. It is obvious, however, that such an undertaking could be

successful only if the agency that might assume the responsibility for planning and administering such a study could be assured of the backing and support of the Association and its affiliated scientific organizations.

A cooperating group of scientists and educators might well devote its efforts, first, toward assembling and interpreting the available facts bearing upon the effectiveness of the schools; and then, by identifying objectively the areas and practices that require immediate remedial measures, toward devising appropriate and practicable programs for improvement. Such programs would justifiably embrace measures to ensure adequate training in mathematics and science in the elementary and secondary schools; to secure proper recognition of the place of science and mathematics in general education; to effect adequate provision for the identification and development of those individuals who possess superior scientific aptitude; and to provide optimal programs for training teachers in the fields of science and mathematics at all levels.

The members of the AAAS and the professional educators are alike in their sincere devotion to the cause of improving our educational system, as a fundamental means of building a strong and unified America worthy and capable of world leadership. Would it not be desirable, therefore, for the Cooperative Committee or some other agency designated by the AAAS to sponsor a program providing for the consideration of means of assaying and improving the teaching of science and mathematics, through the joint efforts of scientists and educators?

For the Cooperative Committee,

JOHN R. MAYOR

*Representing the Mathematical Association of America*

FRANCIS D. CURTIS

*Representing AAAS Section Q (Education)*

MORRIS MEISTER, *Chairman*

*Representing the National Science Teachers Association*

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