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Volume Author/Editor: Wesley C. Mitchell

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Chapter Author: Wesley C. Mitchell

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there is a connection. Each piece of research must have a focus and a perspective of its own if we are to think clearly. But these limitations are not so narrow as to make each area of research a separate island in an uncharted ocean. A more appropriate image is that of several parties of explorers who look over a vast range of country from different mountain peaks, from each of which some of the other peaks and parts of the surrounding lands are visible, but no one of which commands a clear view of the whole area. Explorations conducted in this way yield more valuable results if each party carries with it a base map indicating the position of its peak in relation to the other peaks that should be occupied by exploring parties. As explained, a base map for the National Bureau's explorations is provided by our estimates of national income. The areas under survey from two or more peaks overlap, so that separate parties can supplement one another's work, each making observations that amplify and check the observations of the others. This amplification and cross-checking render the results of the current surveys more reliable and therefore securer basing points for future surveys of the districts marked 'unknown' or filled in by conjecture on our national-income map.

Work done in this fashion has the great advantage of yielding cumulative results. Each fresh observation affords a means of testing earlier results, confirming or amending them. An analytic device invented for one purpose may be adapted to other uses. Materials collected by one survey are often useful for ends the collectors did not have in mind. We are not continually scrapping old results and making fresh starts, but rather using what we have already learned as a means of learning more. Cumulative growth has made science a potent force in increasing man's control over nature. The hope of developing sciences that will give control over social forces lies in applying methods that enable successive investigators to build upon what their predecessors accomplished.

RELATION OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU'S PROGRAM TO OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

Fortunately for all concerned, the National Bureau is only one among many agencies for economic research in this and other countries. There are governmental bureaus, national and local, devoted to collecting, tabulating, and analyzing data. Several research bureaus work under independent charters or in close affiliation with universities. A goodly number of large business enterprises have staffs engaged in statistical or economic research, some of which publish results periodically or occasionally. Finally, hundreds of economists

and economic statisticians are busy with individual investigations. Obviously the National Bureau should take the work of these organizations and scholars into account when planning its own program.

From the start we have followed that rule. Our raw materials consist mainly of the finished results of data-collecting agencies. We try not to begin investigations that are being conducted competently by others. We have accepted numerous invitations to collaborate with governmental or other bodies in studies affected by a public interest. In turn, we often request organizations or individuals to help in work we initiate. Our files are opened, so far as working conditions allow, to investigators not connected with us. In 1935 we sought to integrate our operations more thoroughly with work in progress elsewhere by forming the Universities-National Bureau Committee. Out of that grew the Price Conference and the Income Conference, each of which draws together the most expert and active research agencies in their respective fields. The more recent Committees on Research in Finance and in Fiscal Policy have aims not unlike those of the two Conferences. Late last year the Universities-National Bureau Committee was reorganized on a more permanent and broader basis in accordance with plans the Committee itself suggested and the Directors of the National Bureau approved.

Those who have read our past annual reports, in which the details of our many collaborations have been set forth fully, may have noticed that the distinction between the National Bureau's 'staff program' and its 'cooperative program' is not drawn here. That distinction must be observed in our budgets, and it is not unimportant in our planning. Our operations would be grievously hampered if we did not have funds to maintain a quasi-permanent staff doing consecutive work. The cumulation of scientific results, stressed above, is most effective when investigators are able to use results they have themselves achieved. When a staff is demobilized and a fresh staff formed at frequent intervals, momentum is lost and operations become relatively discontinuous. Indeed a permanent staff with a consecutive program is essential to effective planning of cooperative undertakings. In practice the work of the staff gets so closely integrated with the cooperative programs that the line between the two is hard to draw in any but a formal sense.

THE BOUNDARIES OF OUR PROVINCE

In view of the many ways in which our undertakings depend upon and contribute to researches carried on by others, we should keep in mind the functions that the National Bureau is fitted to perform and what it cannot do. An

attempt to draw boundaries around our province may be made by summarizing the chief conclusions suggested by the preceding survey.

We cannot advise about policies, though our findings should help all members of society to decide what policies are wise.

Our organization is ill adapted to collecting statistical observations on a large scale. At times we must supplement the data obtained from others by field work of our own; but the samples we can take are usually small.

We are better fitted for exploratory than for repetitive work. When we have developed methods of doing a job that should be continued regularly year by year, we prefer to have it taken over by some other agency. For example, we are gratified that the Department of Commerce has assumed the task of making current estimates of national income.

We seek to promote understanding of actual experience. Our contribution lies in 'fact finding'; to us that means exploring relations quite as much as it means estimating quantities. The relation between unemployment and volume of production, for instance, is no less a fact than the number of idle workers or the output of commodities. Indeed, tracing the relations among different economic activities is our chief concern.

Though we wish to take up new jobs as we finish old, our program should have continuity of a sort that will let us benefit both by the experience of our staff and by the accumulation of our records. These records are a storehouse of information that grows richer as we work; every time we use some portion of the treasure we learn more about the value of the whole, and we keep adding new materials to those on hand.

The province within which we work is not ours in any exclusive sense. Other agencies and individuals share it. Through the Universities-National Bureau Committee, the two Conferences and the two Committees it sponsors, and through informal contacts we participate in or keep touch with a range of studies far wider than our own. This current knowledge enables us to integrate our own program with economic research at large, adjusting our studies so as to profit by what others are doing and making our results useful to them.

As an agency created to promote social welfare in a democratic society, dependent upon that society for support, we must weigh carefully the social significance of the uses to which we shall put our resources. We have no claim to superior wisdom concerning social values. They are matters upon which opinions differ endlessly, and what we attempt not only is, but should be, determined in the last resort by what the community thinks worth while. But we are not thereby absolved from responsibility for using our own judgment

concerning what we can do well. We need a program definite enough to reveal the interrelations among our studies, broad enough to indicate how they are related to the work of other investigators, and flexible enough to admit new items on occasion. How far we have gone toward getting such a comprehensive view of our province may be judged from the preceding pages.

We seek to maintain scientific standards in whatever we undertake. That is, we try to be thorough in collecting pertinent evidence and critical of the data we use. We test our hypotheses concerning economic relations, not by their logical consistency with assumptions we have chosen as a basis for reasoning, but by their conformity to observations we can make. We submit findings to appraisals by the staff, by the Directors, and often by outside experts. In our publications we state the sources upon which we have relied, explain our methods in detail, express what doubts we feel about the reliability of the results, point out their limitations, and print the underlying data when they are not readily accessible, so far as we can afford the expense. The effort to maintain these standards has some regrettable consequences. Our researches take much more time, and cost much more money, than they would if we relaxed our standards. Our publications are bulkier, more technical, and less popular than they would be if we did not try to show how we reach our findings and what confidence they merit. But we believe economics would be vastly more useful to society if it could be put upon a more scientific basis. The costs of research are trifling in comparison with the losses from underemployment of productive resources, or the dangers of 'inspirational reforms'. Of course there is no assurance that economics can be made to give satisfactory answers to all the practical questions that face us as citizens. But what other effort to enhance human welfare has a brighter promise in the long run than the application of scientific methods to social problems?