

# Government Needs Anthropologists To Aid in Solving Problems

*Anthropology*

FOR 43 years scientists of the Smithsonian Institution and at various universities and museums have been gathering knowledge about Indian life and customs, yet there is little evidence that Congress and government officials realize that great research organizations stand waiting to aid in solving the difficult Indian problem, Dr. Fay-Cooper Cole, of the National Research Council, declared in his address as vice president of the group of anthropologists attending the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr. Cole pointed out that white men handling native situations in various countries have been successful in cases where they studied the ways of the natives and made laws and arrangements for them which conformed as closely as possible to the customary ways of the land. This was done in the Philippines, he stated, with the result that friendly relations with nearly all the tribes were established, and there was a minimum of bloodshed.

It has been done recently in the British schools north of Lake Tanganyika in Africa, where chiefs of the tribes cooperate with the white teachers as instructors, and the regular tribal institutions are used as the medium for teaching improvements in hygiene, lessons in agriculture, good standards of living, and ordinary school book lessons. The students retain their pride of race and tribe and add the white man's improvements according to their ability. Before any of this was attempted, six months were given over to an anthropological study of three of the tribes, during which time the friendship of the chiefs and elders was gained and the white teachers were content to remain students, seeing what was valuable and needed in the old customs.

The Indian problem is far more complex because the instruction and guidance which would fit a group like the sedentary Pueblos has little practical value or interest for his neighbors who are semi-nomadic.

"It is useless to teach the Navajo how to build good houses without attempting to reach and modify the belief that a dwelling must be destroyed or abandoned upon the death

of a member of the family," Dr. Cole stated. "It is neither wise nor right to deny the Indian the privilege of conducting a native dance by means of which he hopes to influence the powers which control the rain, or which produce fertility. This has often been advocated, but the sponsors should realize that by so doing they not only kindle native resentment, but having forced the rites into secret practices have really strengthened the hold of the old ways upon the native mind."

It is only by following such a policy as that of the British in Africa that we can slowly shape and modify native life and customs, Dr. Cole stated. There is a mine of information at the disposal of those who deal with the American aborigines, but few authorities on Indian life and customs are ever placed on the Boards of Indian Commissioners or put in political positions of high authority to deal with the Indians. The result is that even persons of high ideals are so confused by conflicting arguments that they accomplish little before the administration changes.

In another address, Dr. Cole expressed the opinion that races of men which build cities and make great contributions to progress are superior to races of men which live in savagery not so much because the superior races have more innate ability but because chance has favored them.

To prove that "favorable circumstances and ethnic accidents" play the chief role in the rise of human groups, Dr. Cole cited the Indian tribes of America, some of which advanced far toward civilization, whereas others remained static.

In Europe and the Near East, he continued, the leadership of civilization shifted from the valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile to Crete, to Greece, to Rome, and finally to central and northern Europe. When Egypt was civilized, Rome was crude and barbarous. When Rome got its chance and rose in power and splendor, the northern Europeans were still semi-savages. But once they became civilized, those retarded peoples became leaders of the world.

Accepting the theory that all races

of men might trace ancestry back to a common ancestor, Dr. Cole expressed the opinion that the present differences in races are chiefly the result of mutations, isolation, and inbreeding.

DEFECTIVE individuals should not be allowed to reproduce and multiply the burden of their kind upon society, declared Prof. G. H. Parker, head of the zoology department of Harvard University, before the annual meeting of the Society of Sigma Xi.

The great influence of heredity upon the characteristics of a person, brought out more strikingly than ever by recent scientific observations, should cause people to protect themselves at once from a great menace, Professor Parker said.

"In experimenting on race betterment it seems quite clear that the place to begin is with the most defective members of society," he stated. "Those who are state wards and must be cared for by state funds, and those whose defects are hereditary should in some way or other be restrained from reproduction. Such a step may be carried out by segregation, which has been advocated by many public custodians, but a much more radical means of controlling defective individuals is sterilization.

"When sterilization is considered," he continued, "it is always easy for one to point out who should be sterilized. We all know the personalities about us who are objectionable, and we can quickly point out the stocks that should not reproduce.

"But sterilization is an operation that should not be allowed to proceed excepting in proper hands. It is an operation that should be permitted only through a court medically advised."

California, with a eugenic sterilization law for about 20 years and more than 6000 cases of legal sterilization, was pointed out as the most forward state of those that have adopted sterilization.

The influence of organic inheritance has been greatly depreciated in the past, Prof. Parker said, the belief being that people are influenced to a greater extent by environment.

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