

coordination, as far as the relation of industrial organizations to government science is concerned, arising from the fact that scientists in the government bureaus often have no adequate knowledge of the industries affected by the regulations which they are called upon to draw up and enforce and hence they are not in a position to properly distinguish between attempts to evade the law and real protests concerning unnecessarily restrictive rulings. Very few business concerns are engaged in anything comparable with the sugar trust frauds or would countenance anything of the kind, yet "Washington scientists" are apparently unduly influenced by such cases and do not appear to give sufficient thought to the thousands of concerns with whom they never have any trouble.

The remedy for this condition would appear to lie in the employment of a number of scientists in the executive work of the bureaus who have had adequate training in the industries affected, in place of the present plan of selecting all scientists for government work from men who have devoted their entire previous time to theoretical study and teaching.

In the ultimate analysis the industries of the country appear to be the financial foundation upon which our government rests, hence I would suggest that inhabitants of the structure occupying "top floor front rooms" should be a little more conservative in their treatment of this same foundation.

INDUSTRIAL ENGINEER

THE METHODS OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGISTS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: American students will welcome the views propounded by Dr. Rivers in his presidential address before the Anthropological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (SCIENCE, September 29, 1911). Nevertheless, were Dr. Rivers telescopically gifted, he would assuredly read nothing but amazement and surprise in the expression of American ethnologists' eyes as they peruse his extraordinary characterization of their activity as

compared with that of their colleagues in other lands.

Dr. Rivers's paper is essentially a declaration of independence from the traditional point of view of his compatriots, who, to use his own words, have been "inspired primarily by the idea of evolution founded on a psychology common to mankind as a whole." His own investigations in Melanesia have converted Dr. Rivers to the teachings of the geographical or "ethnological" school, whose home, past and present, he finds in Germany. He has arrived at the conclusion that a direct psychological interpretation of cultural phenomena is impossible, because it ignores the demonstrable blending of different cultures. Psychological analysis, he contends, must be preceded by an ethnological analysis: "... if cultures are complex, their analysis is a preliminary step which is necessary if speculations concerning the evolution of human society, its beliefs and practises, are to rest on a firm foundation" (p. 391).

Apparently, Dr. Rivers has never met with any thing like such views in the writings of American ethnologists, for among these he recognizes only either purely descriptive recorders of data concerning the Indians, or writers who, like Kroeber in his "Classificatory Systems of Relationship" and like Goldenweiser in his "Totemism: an Analytical Study," investigate social problems from a purely psychological point of view.

Now, as early as 1895, Dr. Boas was led by his study of mythology to an expression of opinion so closely resembling the recent utterances of Dr. Rivers that it is almost inconceivable how the resemblance could fail to be noticed. At the conclusion of his "Indianische Sagen von der nord-pacifischen Küste Amerikas" (p. 353), Boas emphatically protests against a direct interpretation of myths as expressions of universal ideas before investigating the historical and geographical causes conditioning the growth of mythological tales. A still more comprehensive statement appears in the same writer's "Introduction" to the "Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition" (Vol. I., 1898-

1900): "We are still searching for the laws that govern the growth of human culture, of human thought; but we recognize the fact that before we seek for what is common in all culture, we must analyze each culture by careful and exact methods, as the geologist analyzes the succession and order of deposits, as the biologist examines the forms of living matter."

It is not too much to say that during at least the last decade Professor Boas's point of view has dominated the ethnological work of the younger ethnologists of this country. American ethnologists have been well aware of the opposition of their methods to those of the traditional evolutionary school, as might be gathered from Wissler and Lowie's annual survey of anthropological activity in *The New International Year Book* (for 1907 and 1910) or the present writer's comments on Schurtz's and Webster's theories as to the development of secret societies ("The Assiniboine," p. 75). Nor has this American point of view been without influence on detailed ethnographic study. In the investigation of the Plateau area, the doctrine of a blending of cultures has been the theoretical peg on which we have hung our facts. This view is dominant, for example, in Dr. H. J. Spinden's monograph on the Nez Percé. It is certainly still more remarkable that this geographical attitude common to many American students should have escaped Dr. Rivers's attention even in one of the two American papers specifically referred to by him. For Goldenweiser's investigation of totemism is not only permeated by the spirit of the historico-analytical method, but includes, in the final chapter, an emphatic protest against any other method of inquiry for the reconstruction of cultural development.

Nevertheless, questions of priority or misunderstanding are relatively unimportant. The significant fact remains that one of the most distinguished of English ethnologists now finds himself in substantial agreement with the position generally held in America.

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QUOTATIONS

REFORM IN COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

THREE notable reports, dealing with requirements for admission and the relation of these to the high-school curriculum, were made at the last meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools at its recent meeting held at Cambridge, October 13 and 14.

President Lowell's report on the operation of Harvard's new alternative method was of especial interest inasmuch as it gave the first results of the test of the new plan. This plan aims to get into closer touch with the high schools, especially those in the west, rather than the private fitting schools, by giving the secondary school greater freedom in courses and methods of study. President Lowell reported that there were 206 applications for admission under the new plan. Of these 66 were refused admission upon their school record. Of the 140 allowed to try, 57 were rejected, 83 admitted. In other words, a larger number of candidates was refused admission under the new plan than under the old. Moreover, several students rejected under the new plan in June were admitted under the old regulations in September.

As to the geographical distribution of candidates: under the old plan 84 9/10 per cent. came from New England states, 8½ per cent. from the other Atlantic states and but 4½ per cent. from the western states. Under the new plan, 47 per cent. of the candidates came from the New England states, 41½ per cent. from the Atlantic states and 21½ per cent. from west of the Alleghenies. As to the character of preparatory school: Under the old plan, 54 per cent. of Harvard's students came from private fitting schools, 45 per cent. from public high schools. Under the new plan there were 15½ per cent. of the candidates from private schools and 83½ per cent. from public schools.

In sharp contrast with the requirements and methods of Harvard and the other eastern examining colleges is the new method of admission to the University of Chicago as reported at the same meeting by Professor Judd and the plan proposed by the National Educa-