

SCIENCE

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SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL WORK IN THE ARMY¹

THE sciences dealing with human nature were brought to bear upon the problems forced upon America by the world war. Anthropology and psychology, economics and statistics, history, sociology and education, were put in service to improve our use of manpower, just as the physical and biological sciences were put in service to increase, economize and mobilize the nation's physical resources.

Consider a few illustrations. At one of the cantonments, within a few months' time, over 30,000 men were given a uniform standard intelligence-test and, as a direct result of it, 600 men who would have been a detriment and even a positive danger to their fellow soldiers were sent away before time and money were wasted on their military education.

Certain very important institutions were receiving candidates a large percentage of whom were discarded, with little but discouragement and envy to show in return for the expense of their time and the government's money. Yet these candidates were chosen by a system which already represented the acme of common sense administered by extremely able men. A scientific study of some five hundred cases showed where much of the trouble lay and provided a remedy.

Under the pressure of the war the regular army scheme for measuring the qualifications and efficiency of its officers could not be operated. Nor would it have been suitable for the two hundred thousand officers taken from civil life with only a few months of military training. A workable record and rating plan was prepared by an expert in applied psychol-

¹ Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section H, Anthropology and Psychology, Baltimore, December, 1918.