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CONTENTS

<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—</i>	
<i>The Practical Value of Anthropology to our Nation:</i> PROFESSOR ALBERT ERNEST JENKS.	147
<i>A Brief Historical Consideration of the Metric System:</i> DR. LOUIS C. KARPINSKI.....	
	156
<i>Scientific Events:—</i>	
<i>The Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History; Expeditions and Acquisitions of the American Museum; The Biological Field Station of Cornell University; American Foundation in France for Prehistoric Studies</i>	157
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	160
<i>University and Educational News</i>	163
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>On the Occurrence of Aedes sollicitans in Fresh Water polluted by Acid Waste:</i> SAMUEL F. HILDEBRAND. <i>The History of Science and the American Association for the Advancement of Science:</i> PROFESSOR FLORIAN CAJORI. <i>Concerning "Aerial Photo-hydrography":</i> DR. WILLIS T. LEE. <i>Soil Color Standards:</i> J. G. HUTTON.....	163
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>The Letters of William James:</i> PROFESSOR EDWARD L. THORNDIKE.....	165
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>Non-disjunction of the Fourth Chromosome of Drosophila:</i> DR. C. C. LITTLE	167
<i>The American Association for the Advancement of Science:—</i>	
<i>Report of the Treasurer; Financial Report of the Permanent Secretary</i>	167

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THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF ANTHROPOLOGY TO OUR NATION¹

THE last few years have taught American scientists the lesson of service to our nation in time of crisis. It had seemed to be a condition of our American civilization that the vast bulk of our people spent their energies solely on their private interests. Most of these private interests were producing things demanded and sold in the market, hence were esteemed at all times of practical value. A science which did not benefit commodities hawked and sold in the public market was given only scant passing notice. This condition has had much to do with the slowness of certain sciences in developing their practical phases. But in our time of national peril it was demanded of every science that to the utmost limit of its practical possibilities it be useful to the state. So great was the impetus given to the development of the practical side of scientific research that in pragmatic America of this hour a science which can not develop its practical side of service to its nation and to its day can not long retain respect among other sciences.

It is probably true, as Earl Gray said, that nationalistic statesmen are largely opportunists who see only a little way ahead, and who are entitled to congratulate themselves if they steer their powerful nations safely among the rocks and bars which appear unexpectedly in the uncharted course along which they sail. A long look at nations as they have come and gone reveals the tragedies of the opportunist statesmen. In modern times the nations of the old world seem to have had their courses quite largely projected into the future by the inevitable continuity of a long historic past. Yet we now see their statesmen too were largely

¹ Address by the vice-president and chairman of Section H (Anthropology), of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Chicago, December 28, 1920.

only opportunists; they could not foretell the future. Since this is true, can Americans easily overstress the need our nation has of all data obtainable to assist her along her course so infinitely new?

I have no hesitation in saying that of America's recognized problems those most unique, and most difficult to foresee in solution are anthropological at base. Because of these problems confronting America our anthropologists have the opportunity and the duty of service to our nation second to no other group of scientists. I put them first.

Psychologists have given us the scientific procedure for thinking through great problems: *First*, there must be a clear statement of the problem; *second*, the accumulation of all obtainable data; *third*, a survey of the accumulated data with all possible judgment and guided imagination, resulting in conclusions which, after constant efforts at refutation and verification, should furnish grounds for future action. I fear that we as anthropologists have sometimes stopped at the second point without going on to the most vital part of the procedure covered by the third. A step further than this is necessary, however. In a nation with government by public opinion and universal franchise any conclusions which are to affect national policies and actions must be so popularized that an educated public opinion will irresistibly dominate the nation in questions affected by these conclusions. Public opinion so engendered concerning anthropological questions would put their solution in the scientific class—that of deliberative thought and action. It would take their solution out of the disreputable but still existing class of chance or luck; and out of the still more common but extremely wasteful class of trial and error. From anthropologists should come the data, as far as possible the conclusions, and to a certain extent the programs for the solutions of our national problems which have an anthropological basis.

We shall not have time in one brief paper to state all the anthropological problems whose solution would be of practical value to our nation. I wish to touch in a general way on the

fundamental value to our nation of practical anthropological research as a whole and then to pass on to a more extended discussion of the relation of anthropology to two of the gravest problems before the nation to-day.

Stated broadly the bed-rock national anthropological problem is the survival and improvement of the human element of our nation. The *sine qua non* of civilization at any time is man's survival on physical, intellectual, and moral planes as high as those he possessed at that time. Civilization is lost to the extent that man's survival-planes are lowered. The goal of civilization seems to be for increasing numbers of mankind to survive on more elevated planes of mutual physical, intellectual and moral freedom. It appears to be a part of cosmic evolution for each generation to press toward that goal. But to a large extent even to-day our generation is pressing blindly toward this goal with its mind on remedial factors rather than on causative factors. There is a pertinent question and its answer in Ellsworth Huntington's new book, "World-Power and Evolution":

Shall we despair because the church, the school, the charity organization, and the state have not yet destroyed war, pestilence, lust, greed, cruelty and selfishness? Far from it. These agencies can not possibly play their proper parts unless science comes to their aid.

The time has come when anthropologists who study breeds of men from the disinterested scientific point of view should help create dominating constructive public opinion founded on research to assist our nation toward her goal of developing civilization.

In my "Report on the Science of Anthropology in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific Islands," published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington in 1914, I discussed this question at some length under the section with the general title of "Modern Problems" and the sub-titles of "Ethnic Heredity," "Influence of Environment on Mankind," "Human Amalgamation," and "An Anthropological Laboratory." I here quote from the opening and closing paragraphs of that section of the "Report":

It must not be supposed that the anthropologist is limited in his interest and his field of work to man's evolution of the past. He knows man is still in the making. He studies man's present-day evolution in its individual and ethnic aspects. He makes his studies of both the past and the present, with an eye to the future, in order that those things which vitiated or benefited the evolutionary process in the past, and which vitiate or benefit it to-day, may serve as guides for future generations.

The field of anthropological study of modern people is new and unoccupied, only the barest beginnings having been made. The horizon of this coming field for research among present and future man and ethnic groups is seen to extend indefinitely into the future. It would be difficult to overestimate the practical value of these continued studies. Their utility would be world-wide.²

A permanent laboratory should eventually be established in connection with these studies in ethnic heredity, environment, and amalgamation where records of research would continually accumulate and where they would be kept indefinitely. From this laboratory new data should be published frequently, not alone for conclusions which might have been arrived at, but that such data might assist investigators in various parts of the world. . . .

It may be argued that, even were the facts of heredity, environment, and amalgamation obtained and available, they would be of little use to-day, since influences are already at work which would be impossible to control. To a certain extent this is true, but one of the essentials of human progress is that man works not for his own generation alone, but for future generations. One can not measure the beneficial results to future generations of a body of accurate and scientific facts available on these subjects. Moreover, facts of this kind to-day in America become a part of educated public opinion surprisingly soon, and have their inevitable and far-reaching influences.³

The president of the Anthropological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in his recent address at Cardiff emphasizes in no uncertain terms the

² Page 54 of "Reports upon the Condition and Future Needs of the Science of Anthropology," presented by W. H. R. Rivers, A. E. Jenks, and S. G. Morley, at the request of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, printed 1914.

³ Page 58, *ibid.*

necessity of making anthropological research of service to the nation, and urges the establishment of "anthropological institutes" in British universities to further this end.⁴

There can be no question of the service anthropological knowledge and research might render to the United States to-day.

In the improvement of plants and animals in the economic life of the United States our experts are constantly at work using as their ready tools every latest fact of scientific knowledge. We have carefully studied, selected and improved the native American maize, potatoes, yams, tobacco and turkey, and built them into our everyday life.

The United States government keeps in constant employ experts who in recent years have imported many varieties of plants and animals which are successfully and permanently built into our economic production.

Among such plants, I quote from a personal letter received from Dr. Fairchild, Agricultural Explorer in Charge, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Washington, D. C., "are the durum wheat brought since 1898 from Russia with now an annual value in increased wealth to the farmers of the United States of \$50,000,000, the Sudan grass imported in 1909 from the Sudan with a crop in 1918 valued at more than \$10,000,000, the Rhodes grass from Rhodesia, represented now by an industry of several millions, the feterita from the Sudan, which since 1906 has grown to an industry of over \$16,000,000 annual value, the Egyptian long staple cotton, which since 1899 has become an industry worth over \$20,000,000 in southern California, the soy bean crop, which to-day amounts to six and one third million dollars, and the newer things, such as the avocado, the dasheen, the chayote, the Chinese jujube, the Oriental persimmon, the Japanese bamboo, the tropical papaya, the Japanese rice, which cover now 60,000 acres of land in California alone."

To this list must be added the date brought from the Sahara or the deserts of Arabia. It

⁴ "Institutes of Anthropology," by Professor Karl Pearson, in *SCIENCE*, October 22, 1920.

was estimated in 1919 that there were 200 acres of date palms already established in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys of California. Concerning this industry Dr. Fairchild says not only have our experts "been instrumental in building up this industry, but their study of the methods of propagation, the diseases and methods of their control, the insect pests and the requirements of the date palm constitute the largest collection of exact data now in existence in regard to this industry, and the Old World has had to come to America for the latest information in regard to this industry. Too great emphasis can not be placed upon this accomplishment and the manner in which he [Mr. Swingle] has brought it about. It represents in my mind one of the most remarkable pieces of agricultural work which has been done in recent times."

Among the recent most successful animals imported into the United States are the Aberdeen-Angus cattle, the Herefords, and the Belgian draft horses. Among the Hereford cattle, solely since 1901, America has developed a polled or hornless variety which has added another virtue—that of early maturity, thus producing "baby beef."⁵

Thus through national, state, county and private expenditure of millions of dollars annually, we now have as integral parts of our economic life scores of plants and animals which were alien importations only a few years ago. Over extensive areas there is so much of common knowledge about these plants and animals that as public opinion it dictates common policies and practises.

Shift the picture just a little. While we carefully nurtured many of our native plants, the native Indians who were here so long that they had become a distinct breed of mankind, and who in thousands of years of adjustment to American conditions had fitted American environmental areas better than did their plants, we either slew, or as remnants segregated as enforced dependents, not only rob-

bing them of their native life which had developed their own peculiar strengths, and preventing them from building into the common life of America, but condemning them to sure deterioration. A scientific study of the American Indians as the men who had adjusted themselves to American environments for thousands of years would have been reasonable. What elements of strength, resistance or immunization had those men developed to have so long withstood the varied harshness of our American environment? Perhaps these qualities may be seen to be the prerequisites of permanent survival in America. The American plant breeder has long made use of hardy native plants to make his more prolific hybrids more resistant to cold, drought, disease and insect pest. Had we been as intelligent in the matter of the Indians as we have been with plants and animals there is little question that conditions would have been better for the Indians, and they might have added desirable strength to our nation.

Again shift the picture. While we have imported so many plants and animals, and with scientific knowledge and care have built them into our common life, there have been coming to our shores, of their own volition, peoples from over the earth of many breeds and many cultures who have distributed themselves here in many different environmental areas. In striking contrast with our state of knowledge about imported plants and animals we possess almost no scientific knowledge about these peoples such that it has become public opinion even among educated persons—to say nothing about its dictating nation-wide policies and practises.

I wish to state again as I stated in 1914, but with added emphasis, the imperative need in America of scientific research among modern peoples along the lines of ethnic heredity, environmental influences, amalgamation and assimilation, and the need of laboratories to further this research and conserve its results. That we to-day should have abundant laboratories for practically every science except anthropology, and ignore the richness of the

⁵ Personal letter from George M. Rommel, chief, Animal Husbandry Division, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

materials in our midst for anthropological studies of practical value to our nation is a mistake whose consequences will be far-reaching in their disaster. "Legislation which ignores the facts of variation and heredity must ultimately lead to national deterioration," said the British birth-rate commission in 1917.⁶ Every day henceforth in the life of the American nation anthropological data should be recorded just as our Treasury Department daily keeps its fingers on the financial pulse of the nation. In leaving this point I quote as a pertinent scientific fact of to-day a sentence from Pearson's recent address at Cardiff above referred to: "The future lies with the nation that most truly plans for the future, that studies most accurately the factors which will improve the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally."⁷

We come now to the first of the two problems vital to America which we wish especially to consider.

Mr. Frederick A. Wallis, Immigration Commissioner at the port of New York, recently said that the greatest problem before America to-day is the Immigration Problem. The whole nation is coming to a realization of the truth of this statement. The seriousness of the problem is equalled only by our lack of data, our lack of methods and technique, our general ignorance in dealing with it. Ferrero, the Italian historian, recently said:

My first surprise [on coming to the United States], and a very great one it was, arose from my examination at close quarters, of the policy pursued by the United States in dealing with the immense hordes of immigrants, who yearly pour into their harbors from all parts of the Old World.

This question was of especial interest, as he said, "to a historian of Rome, like myself, to whom history has taught the great internal difficulties which were caused in every ancient

⁸ Pages 139-140, Guglielmo Ferrero, "Ancient Rome and Modern America," 1914.

⁶ Page 45, "The Declining Birth-rate by the National Birth-rate Commission," London, 1917.

⁷ Page 376, "Institutes of Anthropology," by Professor Karl Pearson, SCIENCE, October 22, 1920.

state by the *metoipoi* or *peregrini* [i.e., aliens]."⁸ This great problem of the admission, the distribution, and the assimilation of the immigrant in America is at base anthropological.

Ethnic groups differ one from another. It is commonly supposed to be true that their differences are only "skin deep," but you and I know that ethnic groups differ beneath the skin. We know that the processes of pigment metabolism are so unerring and persistent that patches of skin taken from one person and grafted on another take on the proportion of pigmentation natural to the "stock" or seat on which the transplanted skin lives. We know also that ethnic differences are so much more than only "skin deep" that ovaries transplanted from one person to another person would reproduce children of their own kind without influence by the person who served as "stock" or seat for the transplanted ovaries. There are no experiments of this sort known to me, but what has been proved true with other animals would without question be true of human animals. Thus there is scientific reason to speak of different "breeds" of people whose differing physical characteristics are to-day due to the factors of heredity resident in the reproductive germ cells. Ethnic differences are not simply "skin deep." They are germinal. They begin at the functional innermost center of the person, and they continue through to the outside. The man who runs sees the outside differences between breeds of people. The anthropologist knows they begin inside in the seeds of the breeds.

Out of the physical man grows the psychic man. As out of these different physical characteristics of the different breeds of people come the psychic characteristics of those breeds of people, it should be expected that the reactions of the different breeds of people would exhibit differences. The practical handler of peoples knows such is the case—whether he is an administrator of colonies, a policeman in any large cosmopolitan city, or boss of a gang of mixed "foreigners" on any American railway job. At the present moment

it can not be said that these differing reactions of the different breeds of men are due to physical differences or to psychic differences or to social and cultural differences, or to something yet unnamed. All that is known is that different breeds of people commonly possess distinguishing reactions in many of the affairs of life.

The American immigration problem is centered in the various breeds of people who are clamoring to come to our shores or who are already in our midst. What facts and tendencies of strength and weakness for the future of the American nation are in those various ethnic groups? On the answer to this question hinges the whole immigration problem. It is a question for the most careful study, the accumulation of accurate data, and for effort at scientific conclusions on the part of anthropologists in order that an intelligent public opinion based on known facts, instead of sentiment or prejudice or commercial profits for the few, may dictate our policies and practice in regard to the peoples coming to us or already here. Some peoples can, do, and will continue to build into the American plan of development. Others do not, and should not be expected so to develop without due education and often tedious application. Others probably never would. We must have a public opinion on this question based on scientific facts as to the relative assimilability of the various peoples already here, and also on the actual attitude of the leaders of the several groups toward the necessary American goal of rapid and complete assimilation. If further immigration is to be allowed or encouraged, the national policy should welcome those groups most favorable to assimilation, and should restrict those unfavorable to assimilation.

So also in the problem of the distribution of immigrants in America wise use should be made of anthropological data. Practically each one of the peoples coming to us from Europe has lived for many generations in one type of environment, in many cases has pursued one kind of employment, so it has developed rather fixed reactions which have

saved it. The anthropologist should be able to put at the service of the nation such knowledge of European environments and peoples and of American environmental areas that the different immigrant peoples could be sent to, or educationally advised to go to, those areas and employments most likely to prove helpful rather than injurious to the immigrating generation.

Let me cite a few illustrations of immigrant distribution personally known to me. A group of well-to-do Holland-Dutch farmers was brought as entire families with some thousands of dollars each from the wet alluvial lands of Holland, and planted in the sand of a northern Minnesota county on farms previously selected for the colony. Those families did not know how to farm on land which leaches dry in a few hours after a light rain, and which in the hot growing period of July and August could profit by heavy rains every other day. In ten years' time the members of that colony of industrious and hopeful immigrants who came to us prosperous farmers are scattered, their accumulations wasted, and, disillusioned, they work for a wage where they can.

Between 1850 and 1860 a small group of Finns came from the copper mines of Sweden to northern Michigan to work in the Calumet and Hecla mines. Since that time, particularly since 1900, northern Michigan and especially northern Minnesota have attracted many Finns from Finland. I know well their homes in Minnesota. There they find as nearly as well may be an environment identical with that of Finland. It is a heavily glaciated area with ridges of drift strewn with immense boulders. Glacial lakes, marshes and small streams are everywhere. The forest is "Canadian" and identical with that of Finland. Other peoples, even the Scandinavians, have passed by those rough lands with their ridges and marshes, which the Finns actually seek out. There they continue to settle, clear the forests and make small farms. They are productive immigrants, happy and successful in their own sort of familiar climate, forests, soil and country life. I know some of them who

are joyous on those farms after having lived some years in the hustle of our Twin Cities. The Finns found their own environment by accident.⁹

The German-Russians also by accident went to the open plains of the Dakotas, and there in areas so like their Russian farms they have become contented and many are wealthy farmers. The chief adjustment they had to make was to larger farms, and American citizenship and language. While around many of the extensive mines and plants of our fundamental industries the Slavic-Russians are struggling to adjust themselves from the open-air life of Russian farms to the intense breathless life of the industrial gang. Many of those Slavs have been as misplaced as were the Holland-Dutch. With expert care and study we put our imported plants and animals in the areas to which they are best adapted, but we allow the peoples coming to us to go where chance or material profit for the moment leads them.

The results of anthropological and environmental researches in Europe and America could be so popularized as to become important factors in the matter of immigrant distribution, and so assist in checking the growing and fatal disease of urbanization in America.

The problem of the assimilation of our immigrant peoples has become of such importance in the last few years that it has attracted nation-wide attention and started a nation-wide movement known as Americanization. It is in this field of national endeavor that anthropology has an opportunity for paramount service to our nation. I wish in discussing this point to bring to you not simply a theory of what might be done but to tell you what actually has been done along this line in the University of Minnesota. Two years ago I presented a paper before this section in Baltimore on the plan then recently passed at the University of Minnesota to attempt to make a practical application of the science of anthropology to the great Ameri-

⁹ "The Finn in America," by Eugene Van Cleef. Reproduced from *Bulletin of The American Geographical Society*, 1918.

canization problem about which the whole nation was so much concerned and yet at the same time about which it was so much bewildered as to practical methods of approach.

The Americanization Training Course has now been established at the University of Minnesota for more than two years. Its object is the training of Americanization leaders to hasten the assimilation of the various peoples in America toward the highest common standards and ideals of America practicable for that generation. The course is founded on our anthropology courses which have been developing in our university for fourteen years. Those courses consisted not only of the usual foundation courses on the development of man, races and culture, but of courses dealing with modern anthropological problems especially those of vital importance to our immigrant nation. They have dealt with the peoples who have come and who are coming to America as immigrants, and with the negroes who came as slaves. They also dealt with the resulting peoples in America due to amalgamation and adjustment, and those psychic results so essentially American that we called them "Americanisms." On the establishment of the training course these courses were emphasized and developed, and on top of them we developed professional courses on the technique, the method, and the organization of Americanization work, also technical courses on the principles of adult elementary education, the adult elementary learning process, and the adult elementary teaching process, and also such practical field courses as supervised work with foreign peoples in homes, residence communities, industrial plants, public schools, etc. There have been difficulties, since we were so largely in an untried field. Some of the courses of necessity were at first only experimental. Instructors had not always all the training we might have wished. But the contact with workers in the same field, especially as we have been able to bring them in during our summer sessions, when they have come as instructors and students from New York, California, and cen-

ters in our middle states, has given a splendid impetus to the development of the work to-day.

The practical value of modern anthropological knowledge can no longer be questioned by one who knows the practical work done by those who have gone out from the training course. We have sent our trained Americanization leaders into several different states and into many different positions, such as those of state directors, city directors, school directors, directors with Y. M. and Y. W. C. A., churches, women's clubs, and as teachers in schools, homes, communities and industries. The continuous demand for these trained leaders is greater than our supply, and a gratifying aspect of this demand is that it so often comes from centers where already some of our trained workers are. Our trained leaders are making good in this practical effort to hasten assimilation in America, not only because they are trained in the professional, technical and practical courses, but, more especially, because through their anthropological courses they are equipped to know the different necessary approaches to, and reaction of, the different breeds of peoples among whom they work. Their work is among peoples. They have been trained to know peoples. This training course is not yet fully manned or as complete as is desired due to the almost universal shortage of funds in higher education. We need especially research men in physical anthropology, amalgamation, and environmental influence, as well as experts in certain practical fields. In fact, there should develop a genuine laboratory of research and of practical application of anthropological knowledge. The time is coming quickly when this will be developed somewhere.

Not only is this work being done in the University of Minnesota but under the impetus of the Americanization movement many colleges and universities which before had no anthropology courses of any nature have recently been putting in courses on modern peoples, especially our immigrant peoples, and some have added various professional courses on technique and method. Not only are these anthropology courses of value in purely Amer-

icanization work, but it will come to be recognized more and more that with America's vast heterogeneous population her public school educators, her social workers, her police and correction agencies will have to make practical use of anthropological knowledge of the various peoples with whom they deal.

To sum up—the immigration problem which is of such dominant importance to-day is in all of its phases anthropological at base, and if we are to arrive at any correct solution of the questions of restriction, distribution and assimilation of the immigrant in America, use must be made of anthropological knowledge and data and research.

The second problem before our nation to-day which is at base anthropological which I wish to consider is the Negro problem. One person in ten in our nation is Negro. We know practically nothing of scientific anthropological value about the American Negro. Toward him there is more fierce race prejudice than toward any other people, yet probably no stronger ties of personal friendship exist between members of different races than exist between individual southern whites and southern Negroes. As to the relative intellectual capacity of the American Negro probably greater disagreement of opinion exists between white persons who think they know than about any other people. There is imperative need of scientific research and the accumulation of scientific data to help our nation in the solution of the Negro problem.

The careful student of our national affairs sees four great Negro movements setting in in America like deep-swelling tides.

The first is that of Negro segregation. A great natural segregation movement is taking place in at least three extensive areas in three southern states. Negroes flourish better than white people in those areas. The whites are decreasing and the Negroes increasing until they not only outnumber the whites, but outnumber them increasingly year by year. A similar natural segregation is taking place also in many of our large cities.

The national problem for us is what type of Negro and culture is being produced in the

areas of natural Negro segregation. As those areas to maintain men and culture of a fair level with the remainder of the nation, or will they be lowered so that a sort of cultural and physical quarantine would need to be maintained? Will those areas spread their inferiority out over their borders? Haiti and Liberia are contemporary examples of slackening Negro culture. We should study the tendencies of this movement in America—this unsought for, uninvited, unintended environmental segregation of the two peoples.

A second Negro movement is the present unprecedented acceleration of Negro migration from south to north. Ever since the Civil War the Negro has been a restless migrant, but during the past three years the migration has turned particularly away from the south, and one million or more Negroes have come directly from their old southern homes into our northern cities.

The south and the Negro mutually understand each other. The white south will tell you that it has no Negro "problem," because there is a perfectly understood procedure in all interrelations between individuals, or groups, of the two races. The north and the Negro are almost total strangers. If the Negroes become proportionately as numerous in the north as they are in the south, will the interrelations between the two peoples be similar to those now in the south where the public opinion and the practise of the white south is, as expressed to me by men in several different southern areas, just this—"The white man will run the south. Whether just or not, it is necessary." The recent northern race riots in East St. Louis, Omaha, Chicago and Duluth are, in this connection, suggestive.

The most accurate data should be at hand in regard to this northward migration, and daily research should be carried on in its many varying aspects. We need scientific facts to understand the tendencies of so unprecedented a movement.

In one aspect of this northward migration of Negroes decisive opinion should be uttered without further research, and that is the movement of alien Negroes into the United

States—largely from the West Indies. Only those who are so uninformed as not to know we have a tragically serious Negro problem in America can, on any except selfish grounds, favor the admission of alien Negroes to America. Have we not wisdom and character enough to prevent the further aggravation of the problem by the admission of some 6,000 more such aliens yearly?

A third of these Negro movements is the amalgamation of the Negro and the white, and the consequent effacement of Negroes by their physical incorporation with the remainder of the nation's population.

The growth in the per cent. of mixed-bloods shows that an increasing per cent. of "Negroes" possess mates with white ancestry. Unless the tide turns the descendants of a very large per cent. of our present Negroes in time will be incorporated in the then American breed of men.

The migration of the Negro to our northern cities and the large per cent. of foreign-born whites in these cities greatly complicates this phase of the Negro question. The foreigner coming fresh to our shores almost entirely lacks the racial prejudice which is native to America. I was told in Cleveland last summer by a student of the problem there that in that city intermarriage between the Negroes and Italians is taking place at a rapid rate in the two chief Italian centers of residence.

A most careful and conclusive study of our people of Negro-white ancestry should be made that we may know how the wholesale absorption of our Negroes by our whites will affect the qualities of the nation as a whole. At no given era in history has one nation probably been inherently greatly superior or inferior to another in the same general stage of culture, yet some competing nations have gone down while others have advanced. Apparently very slight physical, intellectual or moral superiority is enough to give successful advantage, and very slight inferiority enough to result in disastrous disadvantage between two nations quite equally favored by environment. History has no truths to tell of the relative strength or weakness of a nation so largely

Negro as ours seems at present destined to become. If we are not to blunder on in the dark, it is well to learn what forecasts of the future can be made by asking scientific questions of the present.

The fourth Negro movement I shall note is that of growing political power due to developing race consciousness and purposeful organization for political action.

August 19, 1920, the newly elected president of the Universal Negro Improvement Association is quoted in the press as saying, "The day is not far distant when the Negro will be a power in politics." In the October, 1920, number of *The Journal of Negro History* an article by Norman B. Andrews entitled "The Negro in Politics," closes with these words:

In several of the cities of the North there is such a large Negro population and so much appreciation among the Negroes of their political power that they are now launching a movement to nominate and elect members of their race to represent them in Congress. It is likely that this may soon be effected in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People says that in 1913 it defeated bills in eleven states out of twelve which aimed to prevent Negro-white intermarriage.¹⁰ When an organization in the interest of one race in America, a race which numbers one tenth of our total population, can control legislation in eleven out of twelve states as far separated as New York on the Atlantic and Washington on the Pacific, it is very evident that that race is rapidly becoming an important political factor in the life of our nation.

A few years ago one of the foremost administrators of research funds in the United States said the American Negroes could not be researched by his institution because they were a political factor in America. Is this not the all-sufficient reason why we should have all possible scientific data and knowledge concerning the Negro? The Negroes and

¹⁰ Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the National Negro Protective Association.

whites in America have become too dynamic for national disaster longer to be trusted to adjust their differences mainly on the basis of race prejudice on the one hand, or unthoughtful sentimentality on the other.

I have endeavored to show in this paper that our nation should make large use of definite and specific anthropological knowledge to help insure her national development. I am as interested as any anthropologist in all research into the development of man. I am interested in the development of culture. I prize as one of my very richest experiences my intimate contacts with primitive peoples, but, as an American believing in America and her possibilities, I am to-day first of all anxious that anthropologists use their scientific knowledge to assist America in the solution of her momentous problems.

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A BRIEF HISTORICAL CONSIDERATION OF THE METRIC SYSTEM¹

THE World Metric Standardization Council wishes briefly to present to the Mathematical Association of America the desirability of enrolling actively in support of the adoption of the metric system in the United States. This organization is an advisory organization, unifying the efforts of all who are urging the adoption of the metric units of weights and measures throughout the United States, the British commonwealths and the world. There are no decimal dues, but contributions to the cause are welcome.

Whatever theoretical advantages a duodecimal or sixty system might have, the fact remains that man is ten-fingered and learns to count and reckon with these mechanical aids assisting in the process of computation, either consciously or unconsciously. Among civilizations reaching any high degree of culture, only two have carried to any extent any other than a decimal system. The sixty system of the Babylonians and the twenty system of the

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