

DR. K. G. MATHESON, president of the Georgia School of Technology since 1906, has resigned to become president of Drexel Institute. Dr. Matheson will go to Drexel next spring, probably April 1. Until then the institute will continue to be directed by the administrative board, which took charge upon the recent retirement of Dr. Hollis Godfrey.

DR. FRANKLIN STEWART HARRIS was installed as president of Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah, on October 17. Dr. Harris, who was formerly director of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, succeeds President George H. Brimhall, who becomes president emeritus.

DR. FRANK PIERREPOINT GRAVES, formerly head of the school of education of the University of Pennsylvania, who succeeds Dr. John H. Finley as commissioner of education of New York State, and president of the University of the State of New York, was inducted into office on October 20.

DR. HARRY W. CRANE, assistant professor of psychology at Ohio State University, has been called to an associate professorship in psychology at the University of North Carolina. He will also act as psychiatrist to the State Board of Public Welfare.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF AMERICAN LANGUAGES NORTH OF MEXICO

It is clear that the orthodox "Powell" classification of American languages, useful as it has proved itself to be, needs to be superseded by a more inclusive grouping based on an intensive comparative study of morphological features and lexical elements. The recognition of 50 to 60 genetically independent "stocks" north of Mexico alone is tantamount to a historical absurdity. Many serious difficulties lie in the way of the task of reduction, among which may be mentioned the fact that our knowledge of many, indeed of most, American languages is still sadly fragmentary; that frequent allowance must be made for linguistic borrowing and for the

convergent development of features that are only descriptively, not historically, comparable; and that our persistently, and rather fruitlessly, "psychological" approach to the study of American languages has tended to dull our sense of underlying drift, of basic linguistic forms, and of lines of historical reconstruction. Any genetic reconstruction that can be offered now is necessarily but an exceedingly rough approximation to the truth at best. It is certain to require the most serious revision as our study progresses. Nevertheless I consider a tentative scheme as possessed of real value. It should act as a stimulus to more profound investigations and as a first attempt to shape the historical problem. On the basis of both morphological and, in part, lexical evidence, the following six great groups, presumably genetic, may be recognized:

- I. Eskimo-Aleut
- II. Algonkin-Wakashan { Algonkin-Wiyot-Yurok
Kootenay
Wakashan-Salish
- III. Na-dene (Haida; Tlingit-Athabaskan)
- IV. Penutian { CalifornianPenutian
Oregon Penutian
Tsimshian
- V. Hokan-Siouan { Yuki
Hokan
Coahuiltecan group
Keres
Tunica group
Siouan-Yuchi-Muskogian
Iroquois-Caddoan
- VI. Aztec-Tanoan { Uto-Aztekan
Tanoan-Kiowa

This leaves the Wailatpuan-Lutuami-Sahaptin group, Zuñi, and Beothuk as yet unplaced. The lines of cleavage seem greatest between IV. and V., and between III., on the one hand, and I. and II., on the other. Group V is probably the nearest to the generalized "typical American" type that is visualized by linguistic students at large.

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