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THE RELATION OF ANTHROPOLOGY TO INDIAN AND IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS¹

By Dr. FAY-COOPER COLE

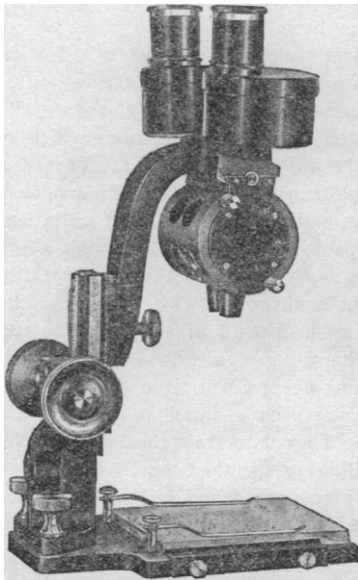
CHAIRMAN, DIVISION OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

FORTY-THREE years ago the Bureau of American Ethnology was formed to collect all the data possible concerning the surviving Indians in various parts of our country. Since that time, departments of anthropology in various universities have been turning out highly trained men who have devoted years to intensive study of the American Indian. Studies have been made of his physical type, his susceptibility to disease and the effects of race crossing, as well as of the development of his diverse cultures from earliest times to the present. The Bureau of American Ethnology alone has issued over 180 monographs and bulletins dealing with the American Indian and his culture, while the publications of other institutions would easily double that number.

¹ Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of Section H—Anthropology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Des Moines, December 30, 1929.

With such a mine of information at the disposal of those who have to deal with our aborigines, we should have the most enlightened policy of any nation in the world. What are the facts? In searching the records of Congress which deal with Indian affairs, there is little evidence that that body realizes it has a great research organization at its disposal. A scrutiny of the boards of Indian commissioners in recent years reveals the names of few men who are recognized as authorities on Indian life and custom, while the administration of the Indian Office has often been entrusted to men ignorant of, or indifferent to, Indian customs. Occasionally men of highest ideals have been placed in positions of authority, but they have found themselves overwhelmed with advice from those having special interests in the Indian.

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