

# THE TORONTO MEETING OF THE SECTIONS ON PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCE- MENT OF SCIENCE

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The recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was the second one to be held in Toronto. In addition to a good attendance of representatives of psychology and education from the United States, there was a considerable attendance of Canadian psychologists and educators. The association between the workers from the two countries was very profitable, at least from the point of view of the visitors, and opened their eyes to the amount of scientific work which is being carried on in Canada. Some of this work was represented in papers which were read at the meeting by the Canadian scientists.

In the first session of Section I, two general papers were presented by men in the University of Toronto. J. A. Dale discussed the place of psychology in university curricula, and in his discussion represented particularly the point of view of the practical social sciences and more generally the demands of the applied sciences. He stressed the desirability of treating psychology in such a way that it would meet the needs of the groups engaged in practical enterprises. G. S. Brett discussed in a discriminating manner the various schools or movements, such as behaviorism, which have been represented in psychology of the twentieth century. W. B. Pillsbury also presented a paper of general nature. He brought the various points of view in modern psychology into opposition and raised the question whether these opposed points of view might be reconciled. He inclined to the belief that they represent permanent and perhaps temperamental differences, but that they are irrelevant from the point of view of progress of the science. A. P. Weiss discussed the fact of decreasing variability with increasing age, and speculated upon the possibility that society may prolong somewhat this period of plasticity.

As in recent years, many of the papers were devoted to mental tests. The results of testing children upon entering school and the divergence in ability in children of the same chronological age were reported upon by L. W. Cole. Several papers dealt with the technique of tests or with general problems relating to their value or particular

significance. The standardization of tests was discussed by Peter Sandiford. He emphasized particularly the necessity of restandardizing tests for use in Canada which are imported from the United States. Methods by which the validity of intelligence tests could be determined, largely on the basis of correlation, were discussed and illustrated by Raymond Franzen. R. M. Yerkes argued the necessity of considering psychological examination to be a much broader thing than intelligence testing, and maintained that it is necessary to use a more refined technique for research upon mental capacities than for application of intelligence tests.

A critical discussion of the application of intelligence tests to college students was presented by J. W. Bridges, who maintained that the prevailing correlations were so low that tests are of much less use in college for classification or other administrative use than is popularly thought. On the other hand, papers by G. M. Whipple and Wilhelmina Koerth described the application of intelligence tests to students in the universities of Michigan and Iowa. Whipple applied the tests to students on probation and concluded that other factors than intellectual ability were frequently the chief causes of failure. He therefore regarded lack of correlation as not necessarily evidence of the unreliability of the test. Miss Koerth showed that there was a wide divergence in the character of work done by those who stood in the upper and lower tenths in the intelligence test. A paper on the educational significance of mental tests, by William D. Tait, maintained that their results are to be accepted as indicating that education should be much more selective than it now is since there are many individuals who are incapable of profiting by it.

A number of papers on miscellaneous subjects may be mentioned. A paper on the psychology of the equation by E. L. Thorndike drew the distinction between two types of equation, the one being a mathematical statement which is made for the purpose of arriving at a solution, and the other being a statement of a relationship between a variable and one or more other variables. The first represents the common use of the equation in the conventional algebra, and the second represents its use in formulae, such as those which define certain types of graphic curves. The use of these two types is very apt to lead to confusion, and the author of the paper suggested various means by which this confusion might be avoided.

A paper by B. T. Baldwin and Lorle I. Steckher presented graphs showing the results of repeated mental tests and of repeated physical

tests of average and superior children. The results suggested that the mental growth curves of superior children diverge from those of average children, and that mental curves resemble and run parallel to physical curves. The inadequacy of children's concepts regarding matters which are assumed in their instruction was described and illustrated in a paper by Garry C. Myers. It was reported, for example, that many children who could recite the fact that Franklin was minister to France thought that this meant that he was a clergyman. A valuable study of the inmates of the Illinois penitentiaries was contributed by Hermann N. Adler. This study agreed with a recent study in Ohio and in general with the results of the tests in the army in showing that the inmates of penal institutions do not differ in general intelligence from the average of the population. The Army Alpha Test was used in these examinations. It was reported, however, that these prisoners in large numbers exhibited anomalies of behavior or of mental attitude. These anomalies, however, are not usually so serious as to make normal adjustment to society impossible. The somewhat related subject of psychiatry in the public schools was presented by Eric K. Clarke with illustrations from his experience in Toronto. T. R. Garth reported the results of a study which showed that pure blood Indians have different color preference from Whites.

One session was devoted to the applications of psychology, particularly in industry. The functions of an industrial relations department, with certain comments on the psychological aspects of the activities of such a department was presented by George W. Allen. The difficulties and psychological problems of job analysis were discussed by E. K. Strong, Jr. He pointed out that job analysis is the determination of the habits that a man must have to perform the work of the job and of the native qualifications that are necessary to enable the man to acquire these habits in a reasonable length of time. In the higher positions, however, the job is something more than the sum of its parts. A descriptive account of problems which confront the handicapped in securing and retaining work was given by Norman L. Burnett. He emphasized the factors of general attitude and personality in judging the prospects of success of a handicapped man and in placing him in a position. Alfred E. Lavell presented the successful experiment which is being made in Ontario to bring about a satisfactory attitude on the part of prisoners by means of employment outside the prison walls.

The writer was not able to attend two of the sessions of Section Q and therefore cannot report upon them.

The vice-presidential address before the section on psychology delivered by Dr. Strong, dealt with Control of Propaganda as a Psychological Problem. A psychological analysis of propaganda was made and supported by numerous illustrations. The paper emphasized the fact that propagandists influence the public by arousing sentiments and connecting these sentiments with particular forms of expression through suggestion. Our present methods of legal control are not adapted to this form of propaganda. Publicity does not seem to be a sufficient safeguard and an adequate solution of the problem is not yet at hand.

Dr. Judd, Vice-president of the section on Education, dealt in his address with the problem of the use of the scientific method in constructing the curriculum. He showed that there is at present no agency whose business it is to collect curriculum materials or to subject them to adequate standardization and drew illustrations from a recent attempt to develop and organize material for courses in the social studies. He offered no definite solution of the problem but presented it as one worthy of serious study.