APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS

By Dr. MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

The anthropologist, in following the dictum that the proper study of mankind is man, must inevitably answer the questions that arise from the related fact that, in the last analysis, mankind's greatest curiosity is also man. And to-day, when this natural curiosity is reinforced by the pragmatic philosophy of our time, it has become increasingly difficult for students of humankind to maintain the detachment of the scientist who works with non-human materials.

Faced with the brilliant examples of the successful application of results of research in the fields of the physical, natural and medical sciences, there are those who emphasize the desirability and the urgency of producing like results in the study of man. What, in the final analysis, they ask, validates the ends of science, and the support given the scientist by society, if it is not to point the way to immediate gains accruing from the work thus supported? How justify his withdrawal to the ivory tower, where, occupied with his researches, the worker seemingly ignores all those facets of his work that impinge on the practical problems of contemporary life? The issues raised by these questions are not lacking in importance. For in considering them, not only are we concerned with the problem of the aims of pure science and the obligation of the scientist to society, but also with the never-ending problems of the relationship between the scientist and the engineer, the thinker and the doer, the planner and the executive. And it is some of the implications of

1 Address of the vice-president and chairman of the Section of Anthropology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, St. Louis, January 3, 1936.