AMERICANISTS IN DISPUTE

Lively Controversy Over Coining the Word "Amerind."

The Discussion Evoked Such Terms as "Hybrid," "Mongrel," and "Monster"—Toscanelli Letters Declared to 'be Forgeries.

A long dispute, which at times was somewhat heated and acrimonious, was engaged in by members of the International Congress of Americanists at the meeting in the American Museum of Natural History yesterday over the use by one of the speakers of the word "Amerind," to designate collectively all of the Indians who live or once lived in the Western Hemisphere. Following the first protest against the word by Prof. Franz Boas of the American Museum, several linguists and anthropologists sought the floor simultaneously. The speeches were animated, and as points were made on both sides of the question, the delegates who favored or opposed the adoption of the word cheered their respective sentiments spiritedly. Finally the presiding officer, Juan B. Ambrosetti of the Argentine Republic, who conducted the business in the French language, had to terminate the discussion when it was at its height by calling for the next paper.

In a paper on "Anthropology in Early American Writings," J. D. McGuire of Washington, D. C., of the American Anthropological Association, used the word "Amerind." When he had finished, Dr. Boas, pronounced by one of the speakers who followed as "one of the foremost linguists in the world to-day," expressed his opposition to the new word. He did it briefly and quietly, but the other delegates took it up quickly.

Prof. Frederick Starr of the University of Chicago and the Davenport Academy of Sciences, denounced "Amerind" as "a hybrid, a mongrel, and a monster." He said it should find no place in the scientist's vocabulary. Mr. McGuire then spoke in defense of the word. He said that it designated all of the Indians in this hemisphere better than any word or combination of words used, and that it was preferable to "American Indian," so commonly used, because that term had come to designate to the average man's mind those of the redmen who inhabited North America alone. He said, further, that he would not have used it in his paper had he not heard it used in the proceedings of the day previous, at which time it received the approval of the congress, no objection being made.

Dr. A. F. Chamberlain of Clark University jumped up and said that it was he who had used "Amerind" in his paper on "The Algonquin Linguistic Stock," on Monday, and was ready to defend it.

"Language is made for man, and not man for language," he declared. He said that he believed "Amerind" to be correct and convenient, and comprehensively expressive. He said that when the word "sociology" was proposed there were objections to it, "similar to those raised here and now and by persons similarly prominent," but that it had survived and attained general use in many countries. He believed the word was fit, and would remain in the contest of "the survival of the fittest."

Several of the scientists were on their feet, calling to the presiding officer for recognition. Prof. Starr again secured the floor. With spirit he declared that no scientist or linguist to-day could say that the word "sociology" is not a bad word, and that its use is not most unfortunate. It would be the same with "Amerind," he declared. He pointed out that it is the universally accepted rule of scientists that new scientific words be formed from Latin and Greek, and that this digression was to be deplored.

"We Americans should think of our fellow-workers in other countries," he said. "What if a Russian were to abbreviate and combine a number of words so as to express a meaning which he well understood, and which was handy for him? What if a Japanese scientist combined the parts of several Japanese words similarly? Wh there would be immediate protest from America and France and Germany and other countries, if they attempted to secure the adoption of their new words by an international congress such as this. 'Amerind' comes from the English, and would have no intelligible universal meaning. I repeat, it is a hybrid, a mongrel, and a monster and should be abandoned."

The venerable Dr. F. W. Putnam of Harvard University and the American Museum of Natural History, and Vice President of the Congress, also opposed "Amerind," "which word," he said, "I shall not pronounce more times than is necessary." This expression evoked cheers from the similarly minded.

Prof. Edward S. Morse of the Peabody Academy of Sciences, Salem, Mass., in making his protest, spoke of it as "that word, which I, too, do not care to pronounce." This second reference of this kind aroused the spirit of Prof. Chamberlain, who had first used the word before the Congress, and with flushed face and some asperity he said:

"There are people who are very near a condition of mind, the name of which I hesitate to mention, as they hesitate to pronounce the name 'Amerind.'"

Juan B. Ambrosetti rapped on the table and called for the next topic.

The word "Amerind," it was explained by Prof. W. J. McGee of the Bureau of American Ethnology, after the session, was coined by a world-famous lexicographer and was early adopted by Major J. W. Powell, the founder of the bureau. At a meeting of the Washington Anthropological Society three years ago this Winter Prof. Powell used the word and advocated its doption. Since then, said Prof. McGee, it has been commonly used by about one-half of the ethnological students in America and one-third of those abroad. An element has opposed it bitterly, he said, because it was not derived from the Greek and Latin.

Gonzalez de la Rosa, delegate from Paris, told how he discovered that the so-called Toscangili correspondence was a forgery, and declared that science had nothing whatever to do with the discovery of America. M. de la Rosa during the past few years made a personal inspection of all available records in Spain, Italy, and Portugal concerning Columbus and his contemporaries, and has just written a book exposing the forgery, he explained to the congress. The man Toscanelli, who claimed in a letter to have evolved the scientific theory that the world was round and to have been instrumental in sending Columbus westward to prove it, M. de la Rosa declared, died two years before the letters were written.

"Columbus, ze bold seaman, he simply say, 'I show you ze shortest way to India where grow ze spice,'" said M. de la Rosa, who spoke in English. To chance, and to nothing else he declared, is the discovery of America by Columbus attributable.

There was a tilt between F. S. Dellenbaugh, the traveler and writer of prehistoric peoples, and Prof. F. W. Hodge of the Smithsonian Institution as to whether the ancient peoples of the Rio Grande Valley were accurate in their measurements, expressed in leagues and in directions, and the discussion was still on when the next paper was called for

A letter was read from Genaro Garcia, member of the congress from Mexico, who is a distinguished anthropologist and writer. He has just written a book containing a complete history, with reproductions of original records, of the occupation of Florida by the Spaniards, and published it in honor of the congress. Prof. Putnam read an abstract of the paper of Prof. Clarence B. Moore of the Philadelphia Academy of Science on the archeological research work along the southern coast of the United States, which he has conducted as an amateur for eleven years.

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