

there can be an appreciable time lag as have been observed by us. Also C. K. M. Douglas⁵ has found that the cold pools are especially important in European regions for forecasting beyond 24 hours. In view of these, the time lag observed in the case of nor'westers over North-East India and East Pakistan need not cause surprise. On the other hand, we can go forward with the hope that the time lag, what-

ever be its cause, should be of great value in predicting these thundersqualls.

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1. Ramaswamy, C. and Bose, B. L., *Curr. Sci.*, 1953, 22, 103.
 2. Petterson and Priestley, *Det Norske Meteorologiske Institutt, V. T. M.*, 1946, No. 2.
 3. Satchliffe and Forsdyke, *Quart. Jour. Roy. Met. Soc.*, 1950, 76, 189.
 4. Sawyer, J. S., *Centenary Proceedings, Roy. Met. Soc.*, 1950, 107.
 5. Douglas, C. K. M., *Met. Magazine*, 1947, 76, No. 904, 225.
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PSYCHOLOGY OF EXCELLENCE

A COMMENT that might be made on contemporary psychology both by other scientists and by our colleagues in the humanities is that in its necessary concern with average and subaverage people it has given too little direct attention to those who are outstanding for excellence of some kind. This forms the topic of Prof D. W. Harding's address this year to Section J (Psychology) of the British Association. It seems important to understand the conditions of excellent achievement, since general progress commonly occurs through advances made by unusual people and gradually followed up by the social group as a whole. The relation between outstanding people and the rest of us is part of the broader question of relations between people of different levels of ability or quality of mind. Waste of human resources occurs through the obstruction or neglect suffered not only by the very great but also by many people of more moderate excellence, including gifted children whose potentialities have not been discerned, and may excel those of their teachers and parents.

Two broad problems concern the psychologist: first, that of the mere perception of excellence, especially excellence surpassing one's own; secondly, that of the response to perceived excellence, whether it excites, for example, generous admiration or jealousy and attempted disparagement. A good relation between people of differing levels of ability depends on the attitude of the abler as well as that of the less able person. If the latter is to maintain his self-respect and psychological security he must feel that the other recognizes the value of his contribution, however small, to the common

task; and recognizes his equality as a person, however subordinate his function may be. The ability to convey to subordinates one's recognition of their equality as persons is one mark of good leadership, and the basis of it deserves more attention from psychology. In some activities (for example, in amateur games and sports) the perception of excellence is aided by objective assessments of performance, and response to it is so controlled by usage and convention that good relations are maintained between people of widely contrasting levels of ability. When less objective performances and more intangible qualities are in question, the difficulties of assessing oneself in comparison with others become formidable and various.

We know rather little at present, not only about the recognition of excellence in others, but even about the psychological processes involved in making an advance ourselves and recognizing that our own present standards are higher than those we once accepted. Many of the unanswered psychological questions in this field are the concern of the social and experimental psychologist; others invite the aid of the psychopathologist, for example, the effect of the child's view of his parents and the effect of sibling jealousy on his later attitudes to greatness and superior achievement in others. Any direct psychological study of the conditions governing the achievements of distinguished people, whose minds may far excel those of the psychologists who undertake it, must raise special problems of technique which have up to the present received comparatively little attention.

(—By courtesy of Nature.)