

There is no universal "best system" in this or the allied problem of dealing with the insane, and each country must evolve its own method, guided and restricted by its own peculiar racial, geographic, and economic situations. These factors have, of course, exercised a great influence in the development of systems so widely divergent as those found in Belgium, Scandinavia, Britain, America, and the European countries. We have much knowledge—we have more theory: let us in the meantime be content to build on a sure, safe, and broad foundation of proved essential facts.

These remarks have been occasioned by the tendency in certain quarters in New Zealand and elsewhere to attach an undue importance to much of the literature on this and cognate subjects published in the United States, without making due allowance for the very divergent conceptions of mental enfeeblement entertained there as compared with other countries of more conservative tendencies.

The term "feeble-minded" has been replaced in America by the word "moron" (Greek *moros*—mentally dull), which was coined by Goddard in order to include these cases where abnormal conduct was the main element in the problem and defect of intelligence less demonstrable. It certainly appeared to me that in America the original meaning of the word has been carried into practical effect with very wide and undesirable results, so that the term embraces persons whom we have not been able to consider as necessarily mentally deficient—I refer to problem children, the less seriously scholastically retarded, the truant, the persistently mischievous boy and the sexually prominent girl.

Practically all countries are interested in this problem, but America has the means to conduct experiments on a large scale, and present opinion in that country has been mainly influenced by two outstanding pieces of investigation: (1) An exhaustive research into the family histories of certain degenerative stocks—*e.g.*, the Kallikak and Jukes families and the "hill-folk"; (2) the Binet-Simon scale for measuring intelligence, and various subsequent modifications.

During the years 1912–14 considerable public discussion and alarm was aroused in America by the publication of the family histories of certain degenerate stocks, notably the Kallikak family, the Jukes, and the "hill-folk." The interest was intensified when Goddard, Laboratory Director at Vinelands, introduced from Europe the Binet-Simon scale for measuring human intelligence. Goddard claimed that the application of these tests led to the discovery of a new class of feeble-minded person, to whom he applied the term "moron." This class is the largest amongst the feeble-minded, and the individuals comprising it are regarded as the most socially dangerous, because, as the defect is not usually obvious and demonstrable by the ordinary methods, he is allowed unrestricted freedom unless he comes into conflict with the law.

These intelligence tests are graded by years, and, with various modifications, are regarded all over America as necessary in the diagnosis and classification of mental defect. The standards now generally accepted in America are—Idiocy, 1–3 years; imbecility, 3–7 years; moron, 8–12 years. The mental age as determined by the tests, divided by the chronological age, gives the intelligence quotient, or I.Q. "It is considered that all who test below 70 I.Q. by the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale should be classed as feeble-minded, and it is an open question whether it would not be justifiable to consider 75 I.Q. as the lower limit of 'normal intelligence' (Terman)."

The apparent simplicity of this method of diagnosing and classifying mental deficiency has made an immense appeal in America, and it is also used, but to a less extent, in Britain and Europe.

The leading psychiatrists, with the knowledge gained by prolonged experience of the complexities of the human mental make-up, have no great faith in the method; its chief protagonists are the psychologists, who have not had the clinical training necessary to enable them to assign to symptoms their proper value. They have eagerly seized upon a system which appears to them to render unnecessary the careful analysis and differential diagnosis of individual cases.

The first chance to use those tests on a large scale was during the world war, when 1,700,000 men of the white drafts were examined. The result was that on Goddard's standard (*i.e.*, a moron being an adult with a mental age of 7–12) 47·3 per cent. of the white draft were morons! It was also found that men who all their lives had appeared normal were really morons, in spite of the fact that they had been competent in industry, had supported their wives and families, and did not come into conflict with the social standards of the community in which they lived!

It was obvious that the tests were arbitrary and unreliable and the results opposed to common-sense. The alarming revelations of the army tests led to their considerable criticism and revision, but, as I have stated, Goddard's standard is still accepted in America, and we must read American statistics with that fact in view.

I have gone into this matter very fully because I find that great importance is being attached in New Zealand to these tests, and I have even heard it suggested that it would be necessary to import from England some one who could do them. I have no hesitation in stating that any intelligent person, particularly one with psychiatric experience, could learn to apply these tests in a very short space of time. I will go further and say that these tests are of very little practical use unless they are correlated with a complete psychiatric examination, and the results evaluated by one who has had long experience in dealing with mental processes, normal and abnormal.

In any system which may be devised for the care and treatment of the feeble-minded in New Zealand, intelligence-testing should occupy a very minor place. I believe that, in the absence of a better system, it might be used for selecting those children who require to be referred to a visiting psychiatrist.

The system of intelligence-testing is supposedly designed to reveal innate intelligence rather than knowledge which has been acquired, but there is evidence on every hand that it fails in its object. Children can be coached up to pass these tests, which have been summed up to me as "tests of opportunity," and I entirely concur with this description. This was rather strikingly borne out to me by a lady doctor who acts as psychologist to a nursery school in New York. Asked about the