

VONDERLEHR



OFFICE OF  
MEDICAL OFFICER IN CHARGE

## TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
American Consulate,  
Cobh, Irish Free State,  
September 22, 1927.

Dr. Lawrence Kolb,  
Hygienic Laboratory,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Doctor Kolb:

Your letter of a couple of weeks ago has arrived and it has helped me a great deal in my work here. There are so many factors that make mental examination of aliens difficult here, that most of the tests with which I was acquainted seemed useless when I first arrived. There is a distinct difference in pronunciation here and even the meaning of words in some instances, so that I have found it best to use tests that require the least amount of explanation.

I have recently modified the so called "Ellis Island Tests" that you gave us and am sending a copy of my modification. I am very anxious to know what you think of this group of tests, whether it is well balanced and whether my grading procedures are just. From the "Ellis Island Tests" I have omitted the tests in which the subject counts from twenty to one, because I have found that a large number of visa applicants repeated these numbers in "parrot like" fashion and I believe that the test has been studied a great deal prior to the applicants visit to the Consulate. This also holds for the names of the days of the week backward, and also for the names of the months of the year. The absurdity and problem question in the "Ellis Island Tests" has been dropped because I found there was too much difficulty in understanding my language.

In performing the revision of the "Ellis Island Tests" that I have made, I have the subject begin with some other month than January in repeating the months of the year; this is to prevent the subject's previous study influencing the test. I am using Knox's Cube Test and in order for the applicant to get credit for this test he must touch the four cubes correctly two out of three times, and the five cubes correctly once in three times. In block No. 3. in the discrimination of weights, only one error is allowed in the placing of the weighted cubes. The Healy-Fernald Construction Puzzle A and the Knox Geographic Test Frame are exhibited

for a period of about fifteen to twenty seconds before the test, then the pieces are emptied from the frame and the subject is allowed three minutes to replace them correctly.

In the repetition of digets I have three groups for forward repetition and two groups for backward repetition. If the subject repeats one number of the three in one group correctly, he gets credit for the repetition of that group. Each group repeated correctly counts two. With the sums for addition subtraction and multiplication, each sum counts one in the final grade.

The Dot Counting Test was obtained from the reprint by Surgeon E.H. Mullen, from the Public Health Bulletin No.90. published in October 1917, and entitled "Mentality of the Arriving Immigrant" and is taken up in this reprint on page 44. The Learning Test was taken from this same reprint and is described and discussed on page 46; both of these are so called memory tests.

In grading the day of the week, month, day of the month and year, a mistake in the year or the month is considered more grave, than a mistake in the day of the month or day of week. Five points are subtracted for a mistake in the year, three points for a mistake in the month and a point each for the day of month and day of week.

Finally each test is counted as ten and an average of seventyfive must be made by the subject in order to pass. Those applicants who grade between fifty and seventyfive are considered as "Mentally Defective" and those below fifty are grouped in the "Feeble Minded" class, or some lower class according to their ability to perform other tests that we have here at hand.

Doctor Waugh and myself are very anxious to find out just what you think of this procedure, as a form of this kind if followed routinely would greatly simplify the procedure for the mental examination of aliens here.

I trust that this will find you enjoying good health.

Mrs. Vonderlehr joins me in sending kindest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely Yours,

*Vonderlehr*