

Copy for
Dr. Kalk,

November 14, 1927.

Dr. R. A. Vonderlehr,
U. S. Public Health Service,
Care American Consulate,
Cobh, Irish Free State.

Dear Doctor Vonderlehr: (Through the Director)

I have delayed a little in answering your letter because the regulations for the medical inspection of immigrants are being revised, and I thought something might be done that would have a bearing on just who should be called mentally deficient. I have, however, written a mental section in a form that will probably be accepted, and have made no radical changes in the paragraph dealing with mental deficiency.

After thinking the matter over, I decided that it would be better to leave the meaning somewhat indefinite so officers could vary their practice when it seemed advisable.

The tests you have devised for use at Cobh seem to me to be good, and I have no doubt that they are better for use in Ireland than the special list that I had you and some of the others work with here. I also think that points used in grading will give on the average just results. Of course you appreciate that experience is the best guide and you and Dr. Waugh are having experience. I think, however, that arbitrary rating according to points will lead into error in this as in any other scale and that you will find it advisable to consider some modifying factors and depart from the rigid rule of interpretation when it seems clear that the rule is not measuring what it is desired to measure, namely, native intelligence. You doubtless also will not apply the rule to quite young children, who would be expected to succeed as more mature people would with the test.

If by your scale from one to one ^{or} ~~and~~ one-half ^{percent} of applicants are found defective, you may rest assured that it is giving you approximately accurate results. It seems to me also that those measuring between 50 and 75 might be called mentally defective, provided you have in mind that some of these really are feeble minded. Where it seems undoubted that an alien is feeble minded, I would say so regardless of the measure on the scale, because the

law and regulations really make mental defectiveness something other than feeble mindedness.

I wish you would let me know about living conditions in Ireland as compared with the United States; for instance, conditions about rent, whether it is desirable to bring household goods, whether there is any trouble about duty on such things, schooling, whether the sun ever shines over there, and, if so, how often. You see when a number of officers come home next year, I am thinking that it may be necessary for me to go over.

With kindest regards to you and Mrs. Vonderlehr, I am

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence Kolb
Surgeon

LK/VHM

Respectfully forwarded:

G. W. McCoy
Director