

homes, and the medical officers of these might well be requested to notify those whom they consider should be certified to the local authority. I am well aware that under the present conditions medical officers have very little time at their disposal, and these cases are not always easy to diagnose by the non-expert. Moreover, it is very essential to avoid any action which might deter persons suffering from venereal disease from seeking treatment by reason of the fear that they might be certified as mentally defective. But the danger is a real one and these difficulties are not insurmountable. It would probably at the same time prevent any mistakes in diagnosis, ensure public confidence against any infringement of the liberty of the subject, and be a real economy, if the practice were adopted of referring all doubtful cases to a recognized specialist in this department of medicine.

In conclusion, it may not be unnecessary to point out that although my remarks have chiefly had reference to the female sex, this is no sex question. I am strongly of the opinion that any mentally defective person found to be suffering from venereal disease, of whatever sex and age, constitutes such a danger to the public that he or she should be detained. But it seems to me probable that the feeble-minded youth is, by reason of his defect, less likely to have opportunities for sexual intercourse than is the feeble-minded girl, and it is certainly my experience that he is a less active agent in the spread of venereal disease, consequently I have dealt chiefly with the female sex. The necessity for detention, however, applies equally to affected males and females.