

Provision for the Feeble-minded, that in the industrial world, the presence of the feeble-minded worker adds to the list of accidents and enlarges the number of unemployed; it reduces efficiency and adds to the cost of supervision.

Popular interest in this subject as a State problem is strikingly illustrated by the fact that within three years twelve official commissioners have been appointed in the United States to study the questions dealt with in this Report, and that facilities for training special teachers have been provided in at least twelve American universities and training schools, and by the University of Toronto.

I may add that all those who appeared before me were insistent upon the fact that conditions were such that it would be disastrous to delay action in ascertaining the mentally defective and determining their future, not only in their own interest but in that of the Province and of the many social interests now working among our normal population. And it may be added that if a great amount of effort and money is to be spent on the problem it should, while we have the opportunity, be devoted preferably where it will do the most good, i.e., during the formative period of youth.

In treating this subject as one of national concern, the words of our gracious King, in replying, on the 31st July, 1919, to congratulations from a joint deputation from the London County Council and Nonconformist ministers at Buckingham Palace, are worthy of being recalled:—

“The potentialities, physical, mental and spiritual, of every community should be developed to the fullest extent. A true education would embrace all these, would cultivate them all in due proportion, and would transform our national life in a generation. The care of the weak and helpless, the protection of our infant life, the guardianship and training of those who by infirmity of body or mind are unfitted to engage in the daily struggle of life, are also matters very near to the hearts of the Queen and myself. New powers of help and protection have been, or are being, put into the hands of the local authorities. This generation will be judged by the use that it makes of them.”

#### (2)—DANGER OF EXAGGERATION.

At the outset I desire to insist upon something which cannot be too clearly kept in mind. I mean that in considering the problem of the mentally defective, much care must be exercised to avoid over-stating the number of this class and the prevalence of what is called mental deficiency. While the total of those afflicted may be large, if judged by strict medical tests, exaggeration is a mistake and tends to discourage efficient effort to cope with the difficulty by suggesting the fear that it is too great to be really met by any reasonable expenditure.

I am impelled to emphasize this feature partly by the information volunteered to me by the superintendent of one of the largest institutions in the United States, that the mental tests to which the army, raised by that country, was subjected, resulted in the discovery that the average mental age of the second 400,000 drafted men was between 13 and 15 years. I have discussed this statement with two of the most eminent authorities upon the subject of feeble-mindedness, both of them in charge of institutions which are regarded as leading examples of training schools for the mentally defective. I found that they readily accepted the statement as quite likely to be correct. Indeed one of them remarked that the average was good, as the age of eleven years was considered a self-supporting one.

I have also perused the official military reports and the contributions of army medical officers published in periodicals, and have found that the average mentality