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DIVISION IX—OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH ENFORCEMENT
OF LAWS RELATING TO CHILDREN

A DEMONSTRATION OF MENTAL TESTING

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Today we are going to show you what a mental test really is. The questions, "Just what is a mental test?" and "What do you do in a mental test?", are asked so frequently by Probate Judges and Child Welfare Board members and others, who are constantly using the results to help determine what action should be taken in the solution of their local social problems, that we have felt such a demonstration as we plan here today should be given in answer to the question. We shall have tested before you today two seven-year old children, who have been previously tested. The result of one gives an intelligence quotient which shows him to be high average, while the other is subnormal, a high grade moron. What these children will do on the tests given in public, we cannot say. The examiner will try and hold the attention, so that the result will be little affected, but one point I especially want to emphasize is that the result of a test given under conditions such as those existing today, would never be accepted as a basis of classification or of determining action. We are showing you two children responding to the test today in order that you may see—provided both respond well—how real are the differences in their ability and how clearly these are shown by means of these standardized tests.

Before the tests are demonstrated I want to very briefly give you something of the history of mental tests and explain some underlying principles. Mental tests, as we know them today, may be said to have had their beginning in the work of the French psychologist, Alfred Binet, who first published a scale for testing in 1905. Binet had been given the task of selecting the subnormal children from the public schools of Paris and grouping them for special instruction. The commission making the appointment left him to determine the means of making the selection. It was in attempting to do this that he began formulating questions and setting tasks for children, keeping a record at what age most children were able to do them. After a long period of careful work he found groups of tests which the majority of children at each age could do, but which fewer younger ones accomplished. After further trying them out he determined that children were mentally of the age of the highest group of tests which they could perform. If the child's actual age was greater than the age level of the most difficult tests he could do, he was below average, but if the actual age was less than the age level of the tests he could do he was above the average. The use of the term Mental Age as a definite indication of mental ability has become a familiar one to all of us today.

Before this time, of course, there had been many efforts to find some

means of determining mental ability. It had first been thought that to test the acuity of the senses would be sufficient; then that a test of tactual discrimination would be indicative; then came the day of belief in the cephalic index or the relationship between the size and shape of the head and intelligence; then came the day of belief that the degree of precision and accuracy of movement indicated the degree of intelligence. All of these were shown to be false and then came a centering of interest on what seemed the more intellectual processes—attention, perception, memory association and reasoning. Even here certain definite tests failed to discriminate, but it was from this point that Binet progressed. He set good judgment as the real basis of intelligence and in his tests he endeavored to discover to what extent a child possessed this. A statement of his concerning the fundamental basis of intelligence is as follows:

"It seems to us that in intelligence there is a fundamental faculty, the alteration or the lack of which, is of the utmost importance for practical life. This faculty is judgment, otherwise called good sense, practical sense, initiative, the faculty of adapting one's self to circumstances. To judge well, to comprehend well, to reason well, these are the essential activities of intelligence. A person may be a moron or an imbecile if he is lacking in judgment; but with good judgment he can never be either."

Working with Binet was a physician, Dr. T. Simon, and in 1911 a revised series of tests were published. It is these which have formed the basis of the many mental tests which have been published since that day. Before doing more in this field Binet died, but other psychologists have carried on his work.

The first psychologist to make use of his tests in this country was Dr. H. H. Goddard, working at the Vineland Training School in New Jersey. Binet's tests and methods seemed so simple that at first others did not realize their true significance. Dr. Goddard states that he had reacted against them for just that reason, but long after his first knowledge of them he decided to give them a trial, merely because all methods in use for determining the degree of intelligence possessed by a person seemed so inadequate. Following this use, he changed and adapted the scale somewhat to American children, and from that day there has been a constantly increasing number of psychologists publishing tests and making studies to find out more of their nature.

The Stanford Revision of the Binet published by Dr. Lewis M. Terman of Stanford University was one of the early tests and one still greatly used today. Dr. Terman is the man who gave us the Intelligence Quotient or I. Q. This simply indicates the ratio between the chronological age and the mental age, as shown by the test. Perhaps I should explain more fully how this is obtained. If a child is just six years old and his mental age is six, the ratio is 1; if six years old with a mental age of three the ratio is .5; while if six years old with a mental age of nine the ratio is 1.5. Instead of using decimals in this manner, the usual manner of speaking of I. Q.'s is 100, or 150. As it seems that

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native intelligence ceases development or at least slows up to almost a stopping point at the age of fifteen or sixteen, one of these ages is used as the chronological age of an adult in determining the intelligence quotient.

The classification of individuals in accordance with intelligence quotients is as follows:

Grade Terms	Range in I. Q.
Idiots	0-24
Imbeciles	25-49
Morons	50-74
Borderline	75-84
Dull	85-94
Average	95-104
Bright	105-114
Very Bright	115-124
Superior	125-149
Very Superior	150-174
Precocious	175 and over

The foregoing table is from *A Handbook of Mental Tests* by Dr. Fred Kuhlmann.

The revision of the Binet to be used here today is, as I have said, that standardized by Dr. Fred Kuhlmann, Director of Research under the State Board of Control of Minnesota. Although having the advantage of evaluating the work done in this field by previous workers, Dr. Kuhlmann gave seven full years to the labor of revising tests, trying out new ones and discarding poor ones before he published his scale, which is today one of the very best scales in use. The following are the points he notes as necessary characteristics of tests in a good scale:

1. Objectivity—the personal bias of an examiner should not affect the test.
2. Discriminative capacity—decided differences in ability shown by children of different ages.
3. Independence of training—abilities tested should as nearly as possible be those which are native and inherited.
4. Uncommunicable.
5. Variety.

No matter how accurate the test used may be, unless administered by a trained psychologist who understands its meaning, the results obtained cannot be used as a basis for determining plans. The tests seem so simple and the directions so definite, that one naturally feels, if unacquainted with the deeper significance, that anyone able to read and follow directions might administer them. However, such is not the case. If we are not to do great harm by using mental tests, they must be given and interpreted by persons with psychological training. Before recommendations of plans are made, there are other points to be carefully considered—conduct, schooling, social background, emotional reactions, general abilities. The Intelligence Quotient may not be affected by them, but the interpretation may be. The Board of Control

of Minnesota realizes so fully the need of training and skill in giving tests that psychologists employed have a Master's Degree as a minimum requirement indicating training. Other factors also are considered, such as personality and experience.

Psychologists, more than anyone else, realize that the best tests administered most skillfully are not infallible; but they also feel that mental tests given and interpreted scientifically far exceed any other method now known for determining mental ability. Sometimes they even seem uncannily near infallibility.

The brighter of the two boys will now be tested before you by Miss Anna Elonen, a psychologist with this Department, and following this the slower child will be tested. After both children have left the room, there will be time for questions and discussion.

DIVISION X—COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL LEGISLATION
 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
 OF THE MINNESOTA COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL LEGISLATION
 FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 12, 1929
 Charles F. Hall, Director,
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During the past year but three business meetings of the Board were held. At the first meeting on November 14th, 1928, the officers of the preceding year were reelected. Following the plan of the Board as outlined in the report given at the annual meeting on September 14th, 1928, it was decided not to sponsor any specific legislation. Miss Marguerite M. Wells, George Lawson and Charles F. Hall were elected as a committee to develop a plan for following the progress of bills in the Legislature in order that the Board might promptly take steps to support or oppose legislation as the interests of social legislation might require.

At the second meeting on January 12th, 1929, the secretary was instructed by the Board to submit to the membership the recommendation of the Board that the three following bills be supported by the committee:

1. A bill to regulate the employment of children in theatres and eliminate the special permit. This bill was sponsored by the Women's Co-operative Alliance.
2. A bill to re-enact Chapter 394, Laws 1927, relating to indecent assault that was declared unconstitutional owing to defect in the title.
3. A bill to permit a county to pay old age pensions to persons over 70 years of age under certain restrictions.

At this meeting the special committee reported that representatives of the Board of Control, State Federation of Labor, League of Women Voters, Women's Co-operative Alliance and others were following close-