

52-RNR-AJB

State Inst - Annex

November 12, 1952

Miss Mildred Thomson  
Bureau for Mentally Deficient  
Grove Building - 4th & Cedar  
St. Paul 1, Minnesota

Dear Miss Thomson:

Re your letter of October 22, 1952, I have been a little delayed in formulating any research plans. We have, as you may have heard, been working on a very important research project of our own. The panel discussion, by the way, ended on a high note of optimism in respect to the financing of the project. I certainly hope the optimism was justified.

When I think of research needs among the persons whom we call defective children who are management problems, I have to rely on my own very limited experience with them. It has seemed to me in working with these persons that many of them, if not all, have serious personality defects which may be primary in their maladjustment. Some of them, at least, have sufficient intellectual endowment to warrant classification as borderline or dull normal in this respect, and with others it may be that their emotional problems affect their performance on intelligence tests (and in other life situations) to such an extent as to give a spuriously low estimate of potential learning and adjustive abilities. I should like to see a thorough study made of the entire problem from a diagnostic and prognostic point of view.

The purpose of such research would be to give a thorough diagnostic picture of each person studied, with prognosis and recommended treatment. A fairly large series of individual case studies should provide precise information of the treatment needs of such cases in general. The disciplines involved in the individual studies would include psychiatry, neurology, physiology, biology, psychology, psychiatric social work, and the technologies furnishing EEG, EKG, and biochemical data.

The subjects would come from the populations of the Schools at Faribault and Owatonna, the YCC centers at Red Wing, Sank Center and St. Cloud, and the Annex at St. Cloud. All of them need not necessarily have been committed as mentally deficient (e.g., at the YCC centers), but only those who have been so committed or who are nonetheless regarded as deficient should be included in the study. I do not know

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exactly how many of such persons are available, but perhaps from 40 to 60 of them might be discovered in the course of a year. This would make an adequate sample. When the results of the studies are analyzed it should be possible to determine accurately what the State needs in diagnostic and treatment facilities for this group. Treatment itself would not be a part of the research.

In order to carry out this project in the most efficient way it is proposed that the subjects be studied at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. The diagnostic services would be paid for in the usual way with no particular plea for reduced fees. The subjects could be quartered and fed at the Rochester State Hospital while they were being studied. It should be possible to do this free of charge in cooperation with the superintendent of the State Hospital. No particular hardship would be felt by anyone if the subjects were scheduled for study over the period of approximately one year.

Estimating the cost of a complete diagnosis at about \$200.00 each, a group of 40 persons would require an outlay of \$8,000.00. A group of 60 would require \$12,000.00. Other expenses would be negligible and would be absorbed in the day to day outlay of funds for food, quartering, and transportation of patients who are in any event cared for by the state. The project coordinator might well be the psychologist at Fairbank or the Director of the Bureau for Psychological Services.

I do not think this would be a particularly expensive project, and the results of an analysis of data obtained would be invaluable in getting a clear picture of what can be done for the mental defective who is a management problem or a delinquent. Whether the state would then provide facilities which might be found necessary for the adequate care and treatment of such patients is an administrative problem.

Sincerely yours,

Carl J. Jackson  
Superintendent

*Alfred J. Barron*  
by Alfred J. Barron  
Psychologist