

tion, are being given a special examination, and the young and immature.

We welcome the interest of the public and of congressional committees in these matters, and while we feel that some of the current criticism is misinformed, we take it all in all as an evidence that the American citizen still treasures his right to be left alone in certain matters which should be his to decide.

In our view, one of the major and crucial tests of the effective functioning of a democracy is the extent to which its citizens are able to use their skills, talents, and abilities in order to realize their own potentialities and to contribute to the common welfare.

A second test is the extent to which a democracy's social institutions, social structures, and specific organizational units function effectively to achieve their missions and goals and, in the process, enable individuals to realize their potentialities and contribute to the common welfare.

In this view, a democratic society is concerned with the wise and humane use of its human resources.

It is in this context and perspective that psychological assessment procedures must be viewed and evaluated. The furtherance of these objectives of a democratic society has motivated much of the work on test development and is central to the professional use of assessment procedures. It is our hope that these tests have contributed to the wise use of human resources for productive purposes.

Psychological tests have made an enormous positive contribution toward securing human rights for all human beings, and they have been of great value to all kinds of minority groups. When a member of a minority group takes the same test as everyone else he may be judged on a much better basis than if he were to be interviewed personally by someone who might be biased.

Most persons realize that competitive examinations of all kinds, including psychological tests, have helped minorities, but it is sometimes overlooked that they have helped women and old people and sometimes young people and sometimes handicapped people who are able to demonstrate through standardized tests that they can do a job. There is simply no question that, although these tests can be abused by persons ignorant of their proper role, tests have been used to help the realization of human rights of millions of persons, and, above all, they have helped our country to utilize more fully its most priceless resource, the human talents of all its citizens.

It may be useful at this point to digress for a moment and briefly record a few facts about the history of the development and use of psychological tests.

In their origin, they were developed as instruments for the scientific study of individual differences. Curiously, the first experiments upon individual differences in a psychological function were made by an astronomer, Bessel, who had noted the earlier dismissal of an astronomer's assistant for errors in observation. Beginning around 1820, Bessel experimented upon himself and colleagues and found a wide variation in speed of response. This was the beginning of what is now a vast literature of the measurable differences among human beings.

This line of investigation was picked up by psychologists and furnished the foundation for subsequent work in mental measurement.