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Questioning Professor Einstein

The questioning of Professor Einstein as a preliminary to approving his application for permission to enter the United States has received a great deal of publicity. Indignant commentators have, however, poured the vials of their wrath upon the luckless heads of American officials who are only doing their duty when they take precautions against the admission to this country of persons who may propagate views inimical to our political institutions. Why a distinguished scientist should be exempted from the inquisition to which lesser men must submit has not been made clear by any of the wrathful denouncers of our consular officials. The truth is that the individuals who examined Professor Einstein are being criticized because they appear to have followed the customary routine without making exceptions for the exalted scientific rank of the interrogated person.

One reason why obnoxious immigration rules and inquisitorial practices have been endured so long is that most of the victims of our methods are meek, inarticulate or obscure foreigners incapable of bringing their charges before a jury of the American people. The conspicuous cases which have caused the public to take an interest in what our Government does to aliens have almost invariably involved persons who are either socially prominent or unpleasantly notorious. Their adventurous attempts to break into the country make good news stories, but the minor tragedies of the lesser victims of officialdom are monotonous reading.

We ought to applaud officials who administer the laws and enforce the regulations of the country without playing favorites and without regard for the feelings of a public that minds a breach of good form much more than it resents discrimination between persons. Impartial application of our laws and our regulations to all prospective entrants into the United States brings to light the necessity for reforms which might be long delayed if our officials always took care to propitiate the eloquent and the powerful.

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