

shops—those with the biggest signs, the biggest advertisements, those that seemed to be getting the bulk of the trade.

"The routine with small variations was the same—a quickie examination leading inevitably to a pair of glasses * * *. A complete eye examination on an initial visit requires an hour or more. Yet the longest examination received lasted fourteen minutes and the rest averaged about eight minutes * * *. If (the optometrist) is a mere employee in a mass production eye-care shop and has a profit-minded boss urging him to rush the patients through, he cannot possibly do a competent job, even if he wants to."

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING in its April, 1959 issue wrote:

"As a rule, cut-rate eyeglass dispensers have examiners on the premises. The examination they give rarely takes more than 15 minutes. Most ophthalmologists and optometrists say a complete examination requires at least 45 minutes."

An article in SCIENCE DIGEST, September, 1960, said:

"One firm, for example, claims that it can fit (contact) lenses for \$29.95 in one sitting with 'satisfaction guaranteed' * * *. A third concern says about its contacts: 'We wear them up to six months without removal.'"

TIME MAGAZINE reported on February 8, 1960:

"Get-rich-quick operators swarmed into the (contact lenses) field, advertising directly to eyeglass wearers through the lay press and classified telephone directories * * *. In an uphill fight to crack down on these fringe operators, the Federal Trade Commission found most of their claims untrue."

Dozens of articles have appeared in our nation's leading magazines, such as those just highlighted, which sound a warning to the public of the dangers of unscrupulous operators in the field of vision care.

The problems involved with unethical practices in this area are: (1) "bait" advertising, (2) the lack of adequate time for thorough examination and service, (3) the lack of quality materials and (4) consideration of profit motive above consideration of the patients best interest.

The materials used in spectacles from commercialized eyecare shops are usually rejects of such a low quality that no ethical professional person would think of prescribing them for a patient. This would be comparable to a physician prescribing rejected drugs or medicines. These reject glasses wholesale for about \$1.00 per paid and are "retailed" for about \$15.00.

Unfortunately, many thousands of our elderly citizens, attempting to save on their pensions, are baited into mercantile and unethical establishments hoping to save a few pennies on their vision care for a rainier day. Many of them lose their vision because of unsuspected pathological conditions which went undetected during the quickie examinations they received. Changes in vision in the elderly may be symptomatic of eye conditions or bodily diseases, most of which would be disclosed by a thorough eye examination and many of which could be corrected if discovered and given early treatment.

No one questions the professional status of lawyers, physicians or clergymen. They would not be confident in these professions, however, if they found that their religious services, legal advice, or medical care were advertised or marketed by a mercantile establishment. Similarly, the specialized health care practiced by optometrists is suspect in such locations.

So far we have described the legal status of optometry as a profession according to the determinations of courts or legislatures. I should point out here that at least five states qualify optometry as a "learned" profession in their state statutes. But, it is not necessary to rely on the citation of bare legal authority to establish that optometry is a profession. There is extra-legal basis for this view.

An analysis of a profession would show the following as key factors:

1. The professional defines the need of his patients, rather than does the recipient of the services.
2. There is a proper rapport between the professional person and the recipient of his services. Thus the efforts of a physician, a clergyman, or a lawyer are very ineffective if the one requesting the service has no confidence in his ability.
3. Generally, the professional person gives services which are terminal and conclusive, while the tradesman can repeat his service or sale if there is error.