

Mr. GUDE. Why does optometry have to be a profession when they can carry out this farming-out function? Can they do this job without being in the status of a profession? Is it necessary to have professional status to carry out this function?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. I am not speaking legally now, but I suspect it is a matter of clarification of what one holds himself out to be able to do. In the case of the optometrist, as a part of his traditional practice and reflecting the decisions that have been made along this line for the better part of a century, it is, I think, so that he can first of all assume this responsibility. If this is not a part of the license or spelled out responsibility, then he has no obligation to assume it, but it is important that he have this obligation assigned to him. Otherwise, we will have to create a clearance. That is to say, if he has no implied or spelled out obligation to detect pathology, then it becomes in the public interest important to make some other provision to take care of this. This is, I think, why it is important to put it in this licensing provision.

Mr. GUDE. In other words, by having professional status, he can better do this job?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. Yes.

Mr. GUDE. Is that what you are saying?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. Yes.

Mr. GUDE. Thank you.

Mr. HARSHA. The mere fact that you have professional status would not enable you to do the job better?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. It would not enable him to do the job better.

Mr. HARSHA. It would depend upon his background and training.

Dr. HOFSTETTER. No, the background—

Mr. HARSHA. I mean the education.

Dr. HOFSTETTER. The education that he gets might be effective for a year or so, but the professor's influence diminishes very rapidly if the climate is not satisfactory.

Mr. HARSHA. May I ask one other question, as to page 12, subsection (7) of the latest bill, H.R. 12276, which reads:

other than a person licensed to practice optometry, medicine, or osteopathy under the laws of the District of Columbia, to utilize the services of an optometrist on a salary, commission, lease, or any other basis or to engage or undertake to engage, directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever, in the practice of optometry.

Apparently this is designed to eliminate the practice in stores like Sears Roebuck—I do not know whether Montgomery Ward does it or not—where they have an optometrist in their store and he prescribes and fits glasses right there, but he does it on a commission basis or salary basis. You are opposed to that practice?

Dr. CHAPMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARSHA. Why, if he is a licensed optometrist?

Dr. CHAPMAN. Because the motivation for the practice that is evident by this type of individual is purely from the profit-making side. His responsibility is not to the individual as a patient but, rather, to his employer. It depends upon speed, how fast it can be done, how many people can be seen.

Statistics will prove the thousands that are seen. There is not given the climate for thorough professional eye care under circumstances