

Dr. HOFSTETTER. It is true. In this situation I think there is an added distinction in that the training is not only added training, but very differently founded training, founded on optics, mathematics, and psychology as well as physiology, biology, anatomy, and so forth, which are not characteristically included in the medical training or in the selection of medical students.

Mr. HORTON. Why, then, if there is such a concern with the practice of the profession, that those who are in the optometric field handle such a large volume of the sale of eyeglasses? Most of those in medicine tend to refer a person to opticians for eyeglasses. They write out prescriptions for them. Why do you have in the field of optometry such a concern about the sale of eyeglasses? This is not part of the profession as such.

Dr. HOFSTETTER. Are you asking me?

Mr. HORTON. Yes. Either one. By this bill you are creating a monopoly for the optometrist to sell eyeglasses, and it does not seem to me it makes any difference who sells the eyeglasses, whether he buys them at Sears, the opticians, or where he gets them. If you are able to do the work that you have to do as a profession, what difference does it make who sells the eyeglasses?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. To answer the second question first on the monopoly, with the bill exempting the 1200 or 1500 physicians and osteopaths in the District, I do not think the 60 or 70 optometrists would ever hope to have any monopoly in this area.

To get to the question of why we are concerned about the lenses, this brings out the distinction I am talking about, the distinction between visual science as a science and the medical care of the eyes, or ophthalmology as a science.

The lens becomes a very integral part of the visual performance of the eye.

Mr. HORTON. Do you grind the lens?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. We can but we would at least specify how it is to be ground. We would specify the shape and character, the topology, and the details of the lens would be specified by the optometrist if he does not actually grind it himself. Rarely does an optometrist actually do the grinding.

Mr. HORTON. Then why can't you refer the patient to some store, Sears or wherever it might happen to be?

Dr. HOFSTETTER. It could be done. It would require a great deal of specification of details which most of these places are not prepared—

Mr. HORTON. Ophthalmologists do this, do they not?

Dr. CHAPMAN. I am getting ready to answer that.

Mr. HORTON. In my area where they practice that is the general procedure, an ophthalmologist examines you, you get a prescription, you get to the optician, and they grind the glasses. You never go back to the ophthalmologist.

Dr. HOFSTETTER. This was true but it is not now. Most ophthalmologists now provide their own dispensing.

Dr. CHAPMAN. It would be unfair to say categorically one way or the other.

Mr. HORTON. I don't agree with that, at least not as it applies to my area.