

UNITED OPTICAL WORKERS UNION I.U.E. LOCAL No. 878,
St. Louis, Mo., August 24, 1967.

Re H.R. 1283.

JAMES T. CLARK,
*Clerk, Committee on the District of Columbia,
 House of Representatives,
 Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CLARK: It has come to my attention that a "To Whom It May Concern" letter dated June 30, 1964 under my signature has been incorporated into the Record of the hearings of Subcommittee No. 5. The purpose of including this letter in the Record, I am informed, was to indicate that corporations that practice optometry in the St. Louis area are guilty of improprieties, which would not be the case if the corporate practice of optometry was outlawed and only individual optometrists were permitted to practice optometry.

The above is a complete distortion of my letter. The practice to which I objected was that 3 optical companies in St. Louis, namely King, Lee and Douglas were sending their work out of town, to Texas, in order to have it done more cheaply instead of having such work done locally. This has an adverse effect upon optical companies which do patronize local laboratories and opticians.

The fact is that many individual licensed optometrists also engage in this practice of obtaining cut-rate lenses and optical services from Texas. Individual optometrists are worse offenders than some corporations. The form of practice has nothing to do with the utilization of cut-rate out-of-town work. We pointed out in the second page of our letter that even some ophthalmologists and opticians were sending their work out of town to the cut-rate wholesalers.

There are many corporations practicing optometry in this country through the employment of licensed optometrists in a reputable fashion and under union contract. We have no quarrel with them. We support the position of the Optical Council of the International Union of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO, and also of the National Optical Workers Conference, in opposition to H.R. 1283.

In view of the gross misinterpretation of my letter in the Record, I request that this letter also be made a part of the Record.

Very truly yours,

THOMAS E. ANDERT,
President.

Mr. WEINMANN. As I understand, that statement was made some seven years ago. I don't think it should be read generally but it should be applied to the specific corporations he was directing his attention to.

We could very well make the same statement about two or three shops in the New York area which we consider to be unethical and we could make the same statement about salon optometrists who are unethical.

Mr. SISK. This statement is later than seven years ago, Mr. Weinmann.

Mr. WEINMANN. The fact is that the taxicab driver who took us here today was complaining about unethical dealings that he had with an ophthalmologist in the District of Columbia who had a kickback arrangement with some optician. So that the fact that these particular places were cited, it might very well be these particular places were dealing unethically, but that has nothing to do with the general proposition. We have corporations in New York under contract for many, many years which we consider to be perfectly ethical.

Mr. SISK. You mentioned you have a contract with Sterling Optical Company?

Mr. WEINMANN. Yes.

Mr. SISK. You also mentioned in your statement that there was no case on record where corporate practice of this type had been injurious and apparently the record was very clean.