

A very comprehensive written examination is taken. If passed, one is then entitled to be examined by a Board of nationally famous ophthalmologists who for three days give a very extensive oral examination covering all phases of ophthalmology.

In 1965 I was elected President of the Section of Ophthalmology of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia. This is an organization of over 120 members, all of who are members of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, all who are either Board-certified or who will be eligible to take the Board.

We feel very strongly that some of the proposals made in this bill under discussion do the public a disservice. It seems inconceivable to us why the practice of optometry, as defined in H.R. 1283, tries to equate optometry and medicine. As stated, the practice of optometry means the employment of any objective or subjective means for the examination of the human eye. This is completely all-inclusive. It would encompass methods and instrumentation that must be confined to those whose training and experience assure safety to the public.

This same sentence then concludes by adding its appendages to the examination of the human eye.

"An appendage is anything that is attached to any object by any means." This definition could mean that the optometrist could use any objective or subjective method that he would care to use for any part of the body. This would clearly be an infringement of the Medical Practice Act.

Subsection (d) in the definition, the determination of the scope of the human eye in general, is likewise objectionable to us. We are not attorneys, but it seems generalities like this should not be enacted into law.

Further in the definition it states that the practice of optometry means the identification of any departure from the normal condition or function of the human eye, including its appendages.

The bill would therefore not only make the optometrist operate as ophthalmological diagnosticians, but make them internists and put them into all other medical specialties.

The practice of optometry, according to the bill, means any of the acts or practices as they are included in the curriculum of recognized schools and colleges of optometry. Congress then is not defining optometry but is allocating it to the dean of any school who might include any medical course in his curriculum.

We suggest that optometry be defined as what it really is and not what they, the optometrists would like it to be, and suggest that the bill be amended to substitute the present definition in our existing law.

As written, this bill not only infringes on the Medical Practice Act, but also restricts the rights, privileges and necessities of the medical practitioner. If this bill is enacted as written, our nurses could not take a patient's visual acuity. Visual field testing, ocular motility workup and other technical tasks could not be done by technicians working under the physician's direction which the Medical Arts Practice Act now provides.

I hope the statement just made by the Dean's Committee of the Medical Schools is well taken and it is apparent that this portion of the Act would be doing the public a disservice.

We object to the portion of the bill which makes it unlawful for