

3. Although the New Jersey Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology does not recommend the purchase of ready-to-wear reading glasses, such legislation would deprive the public of the right to avail itself of cheap and harmless magnifying aids to assist in reading without the expense of eye examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

And, be it further resolved, That the Senate of the State of New Jersey is respectfully requested to reject the enactment of each of these bills.

In Witness Whereof the Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology of the State of New Jersey has caused this Resolution to be signed by its Secretary-Treasurer this 5th day of February, 1967.

JOHN SCHILLIERI, M.D.,
Secretary-Treasurer.

The following statement was made by Arthur C. Unsworth, M.D., before a Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Connecticut. This was in opposition to a bill introduced by the optometrists to outlaw the sale of ready-to-wear magnifying spectacles. It will be noted that Dr. Unsworth is Senior Staff Member of the Hartford Hospital, a member of the American Medical Association, the American College of Surgeons, and has received many other honors. Particular attention is called to his statement—

"It is the optometric group which has proposed this legislation, for which I believe the public good is not the real purpose of bill 984. It is an economic measure to bring the merchandising of all appliances relating to vision under their control.

"As a person becomes older the accommodative power of the eye is less elastic and one's arms are just not long enough to read the telephone book and the newspaper. I do not believe that the public should be denied the right to go to a store and pick out a cheap pair of magnifying glasses to enable him to read. The public should not be compelled to pay for an examination by an eye specialist and then buy an expensive pair of reading glasses if he can do it just as well at a fraction of the cost by picking out a readymade pair of glasses which suit him. If in trying on glasses he finds that his vision is not satisfactorily corrected he can seek medical eye examination, because the optometrist is not qualified to diagnose an eye disease anyway.

"I might add that it is not true that the wearing of the wrong pair of glasses will permanently impair vision or produce a disease of the eye or cause blindness."

The same statement is borne out by Derrick Vail, M.D., who is the head of the Department of Ophthalmology at Northwestern University Medical School and Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Ophthalmology. During the war he was Senior Consultant in Ophthalmology to the United States Army in the European Theater of Operations. He has written a book entitled "THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR EYES," a Medical Book for the Layman, in which he says, among other things—

"But the wearing of wrong glasses will not lead to any organic (anatomical) change in any part of the eye. It will not produce any permanent diseased condition. These dogmatic statements are based on the daily experience of many ophthalmologists. The fallacy of the statement that 'your eyes can be ruined if your glasses are wrong,' used as scare-head advertising, is a very common one. Don't believe it for one minute. Wrong glasses can blur your vision, make your eyes uncomfortable, bother you in many ways, such as causing burning and irritation of the lid margins, but they cannot effect any change in your eyes, let alone 'ruin them'." (Page 54).

Mr. WEIR. Thank you, sir.

Our primary objection is based on the ground that this bill does deprive the public of freedom of choice in the selection of optical aids at considerable expense and, in our opinion, no corresponding benefit.

There is no state in the union that prohibits the sale of such glasses, that is, eyeglasses, magnifying glasses put in a frame.

We base this on four points:

One, the proposal to eliminate the sale of ready-to-wear reading glasses so designed by organized optometry to eliminate competition.