

The final clause of Section 9(c) prohibits the optician from fitting contact lenses, and I have some very important paragraphs in here which I urge be seriously considered by the Committee, concerning the contributions opticians have made in the contact-lens field, but, despite the invaluable contributions the opticians have made to the public in the contact-lens field, this bill summarily eliminates the dispensing optician as a competing force in the fitting of contact lenses.

What kind of justice is that?

To conclude my remarks on Section 9(c), this bill gives optometry the rule of the Great White Father who takes away everything dispensing opticians own and then in 9(c) the Great White Father parcels out a few tidbits which he knows cannot for long sustain the life of the dispensing optician.

The reason why optometry wants to regulate the dispensing optician under this optometry bill has been unspoken. Let me just begin to explain this basic reason by quoting two resolutions passed by the American Optometric Association in June 1954.

Resolved that it is the stated policy of the American Optometric Association in convention assembled that the field of visual care is the field of optometry and should be exclusively the field of optometry; and be it further

Resolved, that the individual state associations are recommended to make serious study of the optometry laws prevailing in their states to the end that exemptions be restricted, limited and ultimately eliminated and that encroachments by untrained, unqualified and unlicensed persons into the exclusive field of optometry be prevented . . .

In the resolution just quoted, I wish to point out that in the use of the words "untrained, unqualified, and unlicensed persons", that they are the same words that optometry uses to describe the dispensing opticians, because opticians are not licensed in 33 states and in the District of Columbia.

These are the words optometry uses to describe dispensing opticians, because opticians are not licensed, as I have stated, in 33 states and the District of Columbia. It is these words that optometry uses as its excuse to regulate opticians under optometry laws such as 12276.

What is not generally known is that the American Optometric Association has a firmly-established and long-standing resolution on its books opposing the licensing of opticians. It is not generally known that optometrists have opposed bills to license opticians in state legislature more than 50 times. Nor is it generally known that optometry has taken legal action against dispensing opticians hundreds of times for the so-called unlawful practice of optometry under laws which were enacted primarily to regulate the refractive aspects of optometry.

In February of this year the Guild of Prescription Opticians sponsored a national seminar here in Washington on the subject of licensing of opticians and invited every organization interested in the subject to present its views. Every organization, regardless of its views, accepted our invitation except the American Optometric Association whose Board of Trustees voted not to participate. The seminar dates were changed so that it would not conflict with optometric meetings but no reason was given for not participating. Does this suggest that the optometry policy cannot stand the "light of the day"? They dismiss all discussion on the licensing of opticians with the statement that such licensing is not in the public welfare, that there is no public need for it. Yet optometry is adamant that dispensing opticians be regulated under an optometry bill such as 12276.