

can Association of Ophthalmology in October 1966 meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago, I stressed the importance of allied personnel which statistically adds up to a medical work force of about 30,000 specially trained technicians, which include approximately 10,000 dispensing opticians.

The dispensing optician may be defined as an ancillary medical worker who supplies and fits such glasses, appliances and devices as the physician prescribes for a given patient. The prescribing physician makes the final determination of the acceptability of such glasses (thus the physician's relation with the optician differs from his relation with the druggist whose finished product can not easily be inspected).

It seems apparent that optometry, in its efforts to equate itself with ophthalmology, would like to exercise authority over ancillary ophthalmic personnel serving the medical profession.

Any legislation or court action or state attorneys' interpretation of optometric law which threatens to deny the qualified, trained and ethical dispensing optician the right to continue his craft is of interest and concern to the medical profession generally and to the ophthalmologist in particular, for the optician is a member of the medical team serving the public.

It is urgent therefore that the medical profession understands the vulnerability of the optician's status and takes measures necessary to insure their security. The A.A.O. recognizes the importance and advisability of legally identifying the relationship between medicine and opticianry, which has existed for over a century.

At present there are 17 states where opticians are licensed. Efforts to obtain licensure in many of the 33 remaining states and the District of Columbia have been unsuccessful. These efforts, on the part of opticianry may not have had the blessing of the State Medical Societies but were defeated because of optometry's opposition to the licensing of opticians.

Would licensure protect the opticians from legal attack from optometry?—not necessarily—Optometry has successfully amended the opticians acts to restrict the opticians' privileges

to meet optometry's objectives. In many states such as Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and South Carolina amendments to the optometry acts have given the Board of Optometry jurisdiction over optician. Any amendment of the optometric act affecting opticianry affects Medicine. And so, I could go on citing instances where licensure of opticians has not proven as satisfactory, as we would have expected it to be. What then is the alternative?

As I have already stated—the American Association of Ophthalmology supports legal identification of the optician. This may be accomplished in the Medical Practice Act by defining ancillary medical workers to include, specifically by name, the "certified dispensing optician." The certified dispensing optician being a person engaged in the business of fabricating, fitting and supplying eyeglasses and other optical appliances to the patient on order of a physician. Furthermore I would recommend for your consideration the re-organization of the American Board of Opticianry to be composed of acknowledged and representative leaders in ophthalmology and opticianry whose responsibility would be to establish accepted standards of training, examinations and certification for those who qualify. Certification to be renewed annually by the Board. The accomplishment of the above measures would give security and status to the craft of opticianry.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the Guild for the many years, (since its inception in 1925) of activity and support in bringing to the attention of the public, the importance of medical eye care. The American Association of Ophthalmology and the Guild of Prescription Opticians of America are thus dedicated to a common objective "complete eye care". I trust that our relationship will continue to be close and meaningful.

I hope that any problems in the future of mutual concern to ophthalmology and opticianry may be resolved by frank discussions and understanding of the objectives involved so that the public will continue to benefit from our association.