

as an eye disease. Yet this illness is responsible for a very substantial portion of all the cases of blindness in this country.

This ignorance of the facts concerning glaucoma is particularly tragic because more than 40 million persons in the United States are suffering from the disease without being aware of it. These people could be treated rather effectively for the disease were they to become aware of it early enough and undergo proper care.

An analysis of governmental expenditures for the aid of blind and partially blind persons reveals the cause of these two closely related deficiencies in our efforts to combat blindness.

Public assistance payments to the blind average approximately \$100 million annually with the Federal Government providing about one-half of this sum. The Federal Government also contributes an additional \$8 or \$9 million per year to State rehabilitation programs. The Veterans' Administration provides another \$26 million per annum to some 10,000 veterans who are totally blind.

That these are worthwhile expenditures cannot be disputed but when we compare these sums with the amount being spent by the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness on research into vision failures, a stark contrast appears. Last year the Institute spent somewhat more than \$15 million for all of its activities related to blindness, slightly over two-thirds of which amount was devoted to research into the causes of vision failure. In fact the total expenditures of all agencies of the Federal Government will this year devote less than \$25 million to learning the causes and cure of eye diseases.

At the present time the leaders in the field of visual research are private groups such as the Lions International who are the prime instigators of the notable eye bank movement in this country. Seventy-five percent of the 80 eye banks located throughout the country are sponsored financially by the Lions Clubs.

As a matter of fact, the Lions operate a vision care center in my home community of Rochester, N.Y. Through their activities there, the Lions provide needed services and health assistance to individuals throughout the central New York area. I know that all of us here in the Congress are well aware of the outstanding work being done by institutions such as the vision care center in Rochester. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to these operations and to the local Lions Clubs which support them.

Since this movement began in New York City in the late 1940's, there has been considerable progress made in the use of corneal tissue to restore sight to the blind. This organization is effectively seeking a means for the cure of visual defects, especially through research into the causes of glaucoma and retinal detachment. In many of the Lions-sponsored institutes affiliated with hospitals and universities research scientists are developing ways to make more effective use of eye tissue.

The Federal Government should give this worthy endeavor a needed boost by accepting a greater responsibility in the field of eye research. We can no longer afford to ignore this governmental responsibility or refuse to admit it exists. The sight of many thousands of people could be saved through more aggressive governmental action.

Mr. JARMAN. Thank you Mr. Horton. We appreciate hearing your views on this legislation. If there are no questions, we shall hear next from the Honorable Peter Rodino.