

Americans. Preventable blindness is a world problem, and the impact of a National Eye Institute would extend far beyond the confines of the United States.

It is true that much progress has already been made in the prevention of blindness through the efforts of such organizations as the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness and such private foundations as the National Council to Combat Blindness, Research to Prevent Blindness, and the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. A very much greater effort is needed, however. The fact that 80 percent of all blindness is the result of diseases whose causes are either unknown or inadequately defined makes it imperative that present research efforts be multiplied many times. Fortunately, there is an increasing number of young investigators being trained by American universities who would be available for this greater effort if there were funds to support their work.

As the director of a small eye research foundation, I have been struck by the boundless possibilities for investigation into the causes of blindness and the means of preventing it. There is no question in my mind but that we greatly need the establishment of an Eye Institute that could assume leadership for eye research in this country and abroad. I do not wish to minimize in any way the good work accomplished by the Eye Section of the NINDB, but such effort could be expanded many times by an Institute devoted solely to eye diseases.

Please feel free to call on me for anything you think I might be able to do to promote the passage of H.R. 12373. You may be sure that I will work actively to that end.

Sincerely yours,

PHILLIPS THYGESON, M.D.,

Director, Francis I. Proctor Foundation for Research in Ophthalmology.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
SAN FRANCISCO MEDICAL CENTER,
San Francisco, Calif., February 16, 1966.

Mr. HERBERT TENZER,
Fifth District, New York, Congress of the United States, House of Representatives, House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. TENZER: Thank you for your very nice letter and it is good to hear from you, especially from the exalted Halls of Congress. We have kept track of you through Mildred.

I had correspondence and personal communications from members of an organization which has just been formed in the country; namely, the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology. This organization comprises the heads of ophthalmology of all the medical schools in the United States and it might be well to get an official statement from the organization. You could do this through Dr. A. E. Maumenee, John Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md.

I am in favor of a separate National Eye Institute for the reasons that it is difficult for the public and Congress to be clearly oriented with regard to the exact position of eye disease and their connection in relation to neurological diseases. Since the eye field also is a surgical specialty there is very little connection between Eye and the Neurological Institute. In spite of the efforts of the very capable people who have administered the Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness, it has not been possible to maintain a proper balance in the administration of eye research and training. The problems involved with blindness are so distinct from neurological diseases that the two have no real connection. Very little work has been done on prevention of blindness or in research in this area and it has not been possible at the present time to properly handle this aspect of the problem. I think that it can only be done through separate departments.

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL J. HOGAN, M.D.,

Professor and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology.