

floor of the House that that will be the end of the time that we can allot to this, so in representing this organization and these professional people, I think you had best do so by highlighting the particular pertinent points that you think the committee should hear because we will miss it if you read page after page and don't get through much of your statement before the bells ring.

Dr. McCrARY. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am V. Eugene McCrary, an optometrist in private practice in College Park, Md. I am a past president of the American Optometric Association and currently serve as director, department of national affairs of the association. I served as a member of the Maryland Board of Examiners in Optometry—appointed twice to 4-year terms by Governor Tawes. I served 10 years as a vision consultant to the industrial vision program at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in Washington. Additionally, I hold membership on the President's Committee on the Employment of Physically Handicapped and am also a national consultant to OEO's Project Headstart, a vital part of the President's program of the war on poverty.

My appearance before you today is to express the interest in this bill of the profession of optometry which renders a majority of vision care in the United States. The American Optometric Association is the national body representing our profession in the United States and our membership numbers over 14,000. We have certain misgivings about this proposal to establish a National Eye Institute and feel the need to express our views from our particular vantage point.

We do not feel strongly "for" or "against" the establishment of a National Eye Institute within the NIH complex. We do oppose enactment of this legislation in its present form because it does not specifically state that optometrists and their services must be an integral part of the Institute, if such an Institute is needed to be established.

We have documented a long series of discriminatory practices against optometry by various Government agencies. It is against this background of discrimination and in this context that we feel optometry and optometric services should be specified in the statutory language of the bill. I call your attention now to attachment No. 1 titled "Discrimination Against Optometrists in the Federal Service."

(The attachment referred to follows:)

ATTACHMENT No. 1

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OPTOMETRISTS IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE

In World War I there were only a few optometrists who were called upon to practice their profession in the Military Service. Most of these were enlisted men and none of them, as far as the records show, were commissioned as optometrists. However, when this country became involved in World War II there was a great need for optometric services, both in the Army and the Navy. The then Surgeon General of the Navy, Admiral MacIntyre, an ophthalmologist, recognized the capabilities and the need for the professionally trained optometrists over the poorly trained corpsman. He caused to be established by Executive Order the Hospital Specialist Corps of the Navy and began commissioning optometrists as Reserve Officers in that Corps. By V. J. Day there were between 130 and 140 optometrists holding Reserve Commissions with ranks ranging from Ensign to Lieutenant Commander. The Army, on the other hand, refused to let any commissioned optometrist practice his profession as such in the service. The result was that the Army trained to perform optometric duties so-called "90-day wonders" who had no optometric education and who were uniformly incompetent to perform the duties assigned them. Approximately half of the optometrists in the Army were commissioned officers all performing non-optometric duties ranging from