

legislation have accepted the "scare technique" as the most likely method by which they might sell this bill to Congress.

Let's examine for a moment the statement made by proponents of this legislation claiming a dearth of research effort being brought to bear on the cause of blindness.

NINDB, the National Institute of Neurological Disease and Blindness, has for many years exerted a profound influence on research into blindness and sensory diseases involving human vision. NINDB's focus of more attention on vision problems has consistently resulted in necessary annual appropriation increases to continue its fine work. In some respects, the expenditures for research into blindness may be a bit out of proportion, especially in view of the decreasing incidence rate I cited earlier. While we must comment that the NINDB staff has involved the profession of optometry very minimally in the intramural and extramural programs it controls, we must in all fairness add that the situation is gradually improving.

We are looking forward to the day when a better balance will exist between the support for ophthalmological disease-oriented research and optometric research oriented toward functional vision problems. A great deal more effort—and probably a great deal more money—must be forthcoming to strengthen the scientific foundation of the rapidly expanding optometric sciences. We feel that NINDB has done, and is now doing, good work in research into blindness. We are not sure it would be wise to water down NINDB's efforts by diverting Federal funds to a whole new series of disease-oriented programs under a National Eye Institute.

In a new NINDB booklet published this year, titled "Neurological and Sensory Impairments," we see that the largest single category of research, listed by disease or disorder, is disorders of vision, with 396 individual research efforts underway within the intramural and extramural programs at a total expenditure of \$12,403,000. We regret that such a small percentage of this sum is being expended in optometric institutions and in the area of optometric sciences.

The October 1966 issue of HEW's Health, Education, and Welfare Indicators describes NINDB appropriations and funds obligated for vision. In 1965, expenditures totaled \$14,343,000. This indicates considerable growth when compared with the 1954 figure of less than \$700,000. The same table shows estimated 1967 appropriations and funds obligated for vision as \$17,410,000.

These figures represent Federal funding of NINDB vision and blindness research work only. With the millions of dollars expended annually from other Federal Government projects and privately funded research in the field of vision, eye care, and blindness, it is difficult to accept a statement, from whatever source, that there is a dearth of research effort in this field.

The profession of optometry relates in a very meaningful way to current efforts designed to strengthen our national health and productivity. Our primary domain is provision of professional care to maintain and enhance functional vision. The accompanying article and tables (attachment 3) may help clarify the extensive responsibility optometry accepts in this important endeavor.

(The attachment referred to follows:)