

Security Act; programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity—specifically Project Headstart and the neighborhood health centers; and our rapidly expanding participation in establishment of comprehensive health centers under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Optometrists, members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, work to combat trachoma in areas where American Indians show a high rate of incidence.

We firmly believe that the U.S. Public Health Service should rapidly expand the number of optometrists in the Commissioned Corps and should more fully utilize the unique expertise of our profession.

The American Optometric Association has affirmed by resolution its recommendation that each and every member cooperate and participate in every possible way to strengthen existing vision care programs at the State level in low vision clinics for the partially sighted in providing functional vision care services to State welfare recipients, in formation of driver licensing standards, in the spectrum of optometric services offered at comprehensive health centers, and a number of other vital activities of similar nature.

Today our profession stands on the threshold of a renaissance in the understanding of the functions of human vision. We have the capacity and the duty to clinically apply this new knowledge to the maximum benefit of mankind. But a tremendous amount of research remains to be done in all areas of clinically applied knowledge. Referring again to the recent NINDB booklet "Neurological and Sensory Impairments," we note that none of the research funds has been directed toward the problem of children's reading disability.

The booklet states that some form of reading disability affects an estimated 150 children per 1,000, or some 15 percent of the entire school-age (5 to 17 years) population. An estimated 10 percent suffer from so-called specific dyslexia, a disorder which is the current subject of a number of optometric and nonoptometric studies. We would like to see the role vision plays in reading disabilities given more attention within the framework of NINDB. Optometrists would like to have the opportunity to lend their knowledge of functional vision to such a program, working toward solutions of difficult problems such as dyslexia and other vision-related reading disabilities.

Optometry has been defined as "the art and science of vision care." In this definition we urgently need to strengthen the "scientific" half.

The Nation needs answers to a number of pressing questions, such as: (1) What is the role of vision in relation to the safe functioning of our astronauts in space?; (2) What role does vision play in relation to learning problems, school dropouts and juvenile delinquency?; (3) How and to what degree can America improve her industrial capacity through better utilization of visual science in a visual environment which becomes increasingly complex each day?; (4) What emphasis is to be placed on the value of adding vision standards to job training and retraining programs?; (5) What toll will the computer age take on human vision and how can we best adapt to the new computer-oriented environment?; (6) How can mankind make maximum use of its visual capacity in order to keep abreast of the technological and information explosion we presently face?; (7) How important is vision to our national defense posture?; and (8) How do we effectively organize all available manpower in the vision field to search out the answers to these and hundreds of related questions?