

It was just a happenstance that with most of the research projects we had, what collaboration we had was with other institutes rather than with our own.

The results of this first research project of the ophthalmological branch of NINDB were reported to the American Academy of Ophthalmology annual meeting in 1954, the title being "Diagnosis and Treatment of Toxoplasmic Uveitis."

This first research project was significant in that the methods of diagnosis and treatment delineated in the report still have worldwide acceptance. It was representative of the stated purposes of the clinical center to provide a place where basic and clinical research could be combined.

The results of this project were important enough to lead Congressman Fogarty to tell his colleagues that this one research project repaid to the American people all the costs of the National Institutes of Health up to that time.

During the ensuing months, I proposed a modest increase in budget, facilities, staff, and new projects for the Ophthalmology Branch. It was refused by the Director of the Institute with the explanation that when the Neurological Diseases Branch was built up sufficiently he would see what he could do for us.

As I recall, when I left the NINDB in 1955, the entire staff of our Branch consisted of about 12 people—a very small group of people to tackle the problems of blindness in the United States.

Since 1955 the Ophthalmology Branch has carried out very valuable research under the capable supervision of Ludwig von Sallman.

However, I feel sure it has been limited by budget, space, facilities, and manpower. This statement I read to you from the research profile, I think, substantiates that. From a study of the budgets of NINDB from 1954 to 1963 it can be seen that only some 16 or 17 percent of each annual budget was obligated for eye research.

One need not be critical of the NINDB administrative staff for not providing more generously for eye research. It is only natural to consider one's own specialty as having more urgent problems and greater importance than another with which one is not so familiar.

The Ophthalmology Branch has always been in the role of an appendage to the Institute and could hardly expect to be considered otherwise.

Instead of criticism, ophthalmologists are thankful that we have had the Ophthalmology Branch of NINDB to give the leadership it has rendered.

It can now serve as the nucleus about which to establish a National Eye Institute. The lesson for us is that we must have an independent institute if eye research is to grow and develop as its tremendous importance to the people justifies.

The National Eye Institute will become a symbol and focus about which the people and organizations interested in eye research and sight conservation can group.

Hardly any of them now realize we have an eye institute under this camouflage name of "blindness." It will become the fountainhead and coordinator of eye research and the repository of scientific advances in the field of eye research.