

identification of the most urgent areas for ophthalmic research, and application of these researches to the care of the patient. A separate supervision in the form of an Eye Institute is the most effective way of accomplishing the ideals which we aim for. Such an Institute will almost certainly be established eventually and the most appropriate time is now.

I thank you.

Mr. JARMAN. Thank you, Dr. Cogan.

Dr. Maumenee, who is our next witness?

Dr. MAUMENEE. Dr. Bradley R. Straatsma.

**STATEMENT OF DR. BRADLEY R. STRAATSMA, M.D., DIRECTOR,
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CALIF.**

Dr. STRAATSMA. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Dr. Bradley R. Straatsma, director of the Jules Stein Eye Institute and professor and chief of the Division of Ophthalmology at the UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles, Calif.

In addition to fulfilling these positions, I have, during the past year, served as chairman of the American Medical Association Section on Ophthalmology and chairman of the Western Section of the Association for Research in Ophthalmology.

I am here before your committee to urge you to act favorably on the legislation to establish a separate Eye Institute in the National Institutes of Health.

There are a number of overwhelming reasons for the establishment of a National Eye Institute, not the least of which is the enormous dimension of the problem related to vision disorders and blindness. Too often, in my judgment, we consider this problem without fully reflecting on the figures that define its magnitude.

The fact is that 90 million Americans have some form of ocular misfunction. More than 12 million schoolchildren require eye care; 3,500,000 people in this country have a permanent, noncorrectable, visual defect; 1,500,000 are blind in one eye according to the legal definition of this condition, and 416,000 are blind in both eyes. More than 32,000 Americans lose their vision each year so that in the 20-year period from 1940 to 1960 the blind population in the United States increased by 67 percent while the general population increased by only 36 percent.

In my own State of California, nearly half the population is considered to have some type of ocular disturbance. There are 1,200,000 schoolchildren in need of eye care; 34,500 people are legally blind, and in the 5 years from 1960 to 1965 the blind population increased by more than 17 percent.

These figures are appalling, but even these statistics do not adequately express the cost of blindness in economic or human terms. For this it is essential to consider the loss of social and economic productivity associated with sight deprivation, the nearly \$1 billion that is spent annually to aid the blind or the human unhappiness caused by the inability to see. More than any other facet, it is this loss of human