

Why couldn't you approach the Surgeon General seeking a separate department so there would have been greater efficiency in the past few years rather than having Mr. Stein's statement in the record that we have not done enough for blindness?

Dr. COGAN. This is now actually what we are asking. We are asking for separate representation now. Had we originally started with a separate eye institute, it would have been a most logical thing to do.

Historically, this is the way the institutes developed and we were tagged on by a very gracious group of neurologists when we had no other spokesman.

Mr. KYROS. It is the consensus of this outstanding group of doctors here that indeed the Federal Government should play a leading role in this Eye Institute and the Surgeon General, as set forth in H.R. 12843, should head this up.

Dr. KAUFMAN. I think there is one little point of misunderstanding.

What you seem to have proposed is the Government take a lump of money and give it to us and in essence say, "Do whatever you want with it."

Mr. KYROS. This would be if you had a public corporation.

Dr. KAUFMAN. We all feel the present structure of the National Institutes of Health is really second to none. The amount the NIH has contributed in terms of basic research in the health of our country is enormous. The system of checks and balances where Congress can review what is going on and where divisions within the NIH can review their own programs has been so eminently satisfactory it seems ridiculous to me to set up a totally different administrative structure and perhaps a structure that would not have the checks and balances in the best interests of the country.

This is why we feel no special group with special bias or interests should be supported in this way. We would like to continue the benefits which have been enormous of the general National Institutes of Health structure.

Mr. KYROS. You mentioned optometrists. Do you believe optometrists could serve on the Advisory Council under this bill as proposed?

Dr. KAUFMAN. Perhaps Dr. Maumenee can speak to that.

Dr. MAUMENEE. We do not think that any specialty, including ophthalmology, should be specifically represented in the bill to be represented on the council. We think it should be left to the Surgeon General.

However, we would welcome an optometrist on the Council if the Surgeon General wanted one. There are other specialties such as biochemistry, which might be represented on the Council; therefore, we think they should not be mentioned.

Mr. KYROS. Optics was also mentioned and the fact that in this area it is so specialized, the physics science of optics, do you think physiological research in optics should be supported by the eye institute?

Dr. MAUMENEE. Absolutely.

Mr. KYROS. I don't want you to think I am opposed to this, but I am down here in my first term in Congress and I need to learn and quite often I hear that the Federal Government should not get in so many problems.

Here I see an eminent group of ophthalmologists who wholeheartedly propose a Federal program.