

April 9, 1984

LB 561

he feels ophthalmologists medically speaking are more qualified to treat ailments of the eye than optometrists. But since he is a defender of the bill and not an introducer of it, I would like to ask Senator Clark a question or two on that score if he would answer. Senator Clark, do you agree with what Senator Landis said in that regard?

SENATOR CLARK: I'll tell you if I was going to have a retina detachment or anything else, I would certainly have an ophthalmologist because an optometrist is not trained in surgery.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Do you think that for the types of ailments mentioned in the bill that the optometrists would be allowed to treat, there are symptoms which could be common to other deeper or underlying ailments which an optometrist based on this bill would not be authorized to treat?

SENATOR CLARK: The optometrist has to diagnose in the first place. We are talking about the anterior portion of the eye and I think they are very, very, very well qualified to take care of the anterior portion of the eye or to diagnose what is inside to send to an ophthalmologist.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So your answer I take it then is that there would not be a symptom which could mislead an optometrist into thinking that a problem is not as serious as it really is. He would understand all of the matters that would come before him during these examinations.

SENATOR CLARK: I don't know that, any more than there would be a symptom that would lead an ophthalmologist to perform a diagnosis that wasn't correct. I don't know that.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay, now to see if my memory is correct, when a bill came in last year or the year before, did the optometrists say that all they were seeking was the right or the authority to put these drops in the eyes to go along with diagnosing for the purpose of fitting glasses and so forth?