

C.A.O. BULLETIN

ANNOUNCING SINGLE BODY FOR U.K. OPTOMETRY

The ophthalmic optical profession has announced the advent of the British College of Ophthalmic Opticians which came into being on March 1st, 1980.

The most important immediate advantage of the College is the formation of a single examining body for ophthalmic opticians in place of the three which existed formerly, namely, The British Optical Association, the Scottish Association of Opticians and The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. It is also anticipated that a single body speaking with one voice will have considerably more professional influence.

The objects of the College are to act as a professional and educational body for the furtherance of the interests of ophthalmic optics and the well-being and welfare of patients. The College already has an Academic Committee, an Executive Committee, a Finance Committee and a Professional Standards Committee.

The College now has powers to:

- establish and maintain libraries and museums and other facilities for study and research
- grant scholarships, bursaries and prizes
- organise, supervise and approve courses of instruction and training in ophthalmic optics and related subjects
- conduct examinations in these subjects and to issue certificates and diplomas to successful candidates
- co-operate with universities and colleges and other educational institutions and with other persons or bodies whether within or outside the United Kingdom, and international organisations with a view of promoting the objects of the College

- act as an authoritative body for the purpose of consultation in matters of public and professional interest concerning ophthalmic opticians
- maintain a register of members
- invite subscriptions and donations
- to print and publish any books, periodicals, newspapers, leaflets and other material the College may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.

Additionally, the British Optical Association Foundation Trust will be set up within the framework of the College in order to keep alive the memory of the British Optical Association. Its principal concerns will be the Library and Museum which the Association has given to the College, and the organisation, in association with the Academic Committee of higher qualification examinations.

Under the terms of the Agreement between the three sponsoring bodies the following conditions will prevail.

All current holders of the qualifications of the three sponsoring bodies (F.B.O.A., F.S.A.O., F.S.M.C.) will be eligible for Fellowship of the College. Fellowship to the College will be indicated by the initials F.B.C.O. Thereafter candidates would have to complete the professional qualifying examination of the College and requirements as regards pre-registration experience, etc., and would then be granted D.Opt. and offered Membership of the College. These candidates would then be entitled to use the initials M.B.C.O. and should discontinue the initials D.Opt.

The College will seek to encourage Fellows to discontinue the use of other existing qualifications in favour of F.B.C.O. However, if they hold Honours qualifications or specialist qualifications, they can continue to use those in addition to F.B.C.O., i.e. F.B.C.O., F.S.M.C. (Hons.), F.B.O.A., H.D., D.C.L.P., D. Orth., would be allowable. Fellows can, if they wish, continue using the qualifications they currently hold, without F.B.C.O.

The College will also run 'specialist' examinations for contact lens practice and orthoptics and successful candidates will then use the initials D.C.L.P. and D. Orth respectively. There will also be a Fellowship examination of a higher standard and successful candidates will be able to use the initials F.B.C.O.

In the interests of the profession generally, a Liaison Committee has been established with the political and protective body, the Association of Optical Practitioners, and close contact is being established with the new Faculty of Dispensing Opticians.

GOS SIGHT TEST – CHARGE PAYABLE BY PATIENT

In the British House of Commons on 26th March 1980, the Secretary of State for Social Services, Mr. Patrick Jenkin M.P., announced the introduction of a £2 statutory charge for an NHS sight test from 1st April, 1981.

The Officers of the Joint Committee of Ophthalmic Opticians, who

were not consulted in advance of the Parliamentary announcement, have asked for an early meeting with the Secretary of State.

The representatives of the ophthalmic optical profession are opposed to statutory charges on the grounds of their deterrent effect. Statutory charges for medical and para medical services discourage patients from seeking the service they need, and the introduction of a charge payable at the time of examination could be more damaging in "health care" terms than any other measure ever proposed since the inception of the NHS, they say.

To introduce a statutory charge of any kind payable by the patient for an examination, whether medical, dental or ophthalmic, as is now proposed for ophthalmic examination, would breach a fundamental principle of the NHS State spokesmen say, namely, "examination without charge". The profession's representatives hope to persuade the Secretary of State that this fundamental principle should be preserved.

The main purpose of an eye examination (NHS sight test) is concerned with the detection of any ocular abnormality or disease. This is of much greater importance than the secondary function, important

though that is, of determining what corrective lenses (if any) are required.

On the 28th January, 1980, a letter was sent to the Government spokesman in the House of Lords on Health Service matters by Committee, Hon. Secretary R.T. Pine, pointing to the "growing concern among eye-care practitioners that not enough is being done to encourage regular eye examination which could facilitate the early detection of glaucoma and other diseases".

The letter held that a statutory charge, such as the Secretary of State has proposed, will act as a deterrent to many people, particularly the elderly. To deter a patient from seeking an eye examination is to prevent an early visual assessment of the patient when, if an abnormal condition of any kind is seen or suspected by the examining practitioner, immediate steps can be taken in the patient's interest - the letter states.

The fact is that a significant percentage (recent figures suggest 6.6%) of all patients examined under NHS General Ophthalmic Services are found to have an ocular abnormality of some kind. Patients usually attend an examination unaware of any ocular abnormality.

The representative body of

ophthalmic opticians will raise vigorous objection to the British Secretary of State's proposal - CJO will update this situation as information becomes available.

Professional Press Changes Hands

Chicago - May 7, 1980 - The Professional Press, Inc., a major ophthalmic publishing company in the United States, has been acquired by Capital Cities Communications, Inc., headquartered in New York.

The Professional Press is the publisher of OPTOMETRIC MONTHLY, OPTICAL INDEX INTERNATIONAL CONTACT LENS CLINIC, N.O.R.E. (Modern Ophthalmic Retailing), JOURNAL OF LEARNING DISABILITIES, directories of optometrists and ophthalmologists, and a complete library of professional textbooks used by schools of optometry and opticianry and practitioners throughout the world.

Capital Cities Communications owns 6 television stations, 13 radio stations, 5 daily newspapers and Fairchild Publications, Inc. Fairchild publishes 23 special publications including the International Medical News Group.

LETTERS

Are We Too Affluent and Lazy

Dear Maurice:

Each issue of the JOURNAL seems to be better than the previous! It must be a great source of pride and satisfaction to see "your baby" maturing to such status.

The only weak section of the JOURNAL is the "Letters to the Editor". One would think that we practitioners would want to comment and argue our diverse opinions more often than we do. I guess we

are too affluent and lazy in these dizzy and busy times.

I particularly enjoyed the Contact Lens Issue and found the Harry Inns "TABLES" most invaluable as a resource paper.

As well, I detected one small error in the table on lenses. It showed the FREFLEX lens compatible with enzymatic cleaners. But in practise I have found it disastrous to use the Hydrocare tablet with this lens. The mfgr tells me that the lens is so porous that the chlorine gets into the hema and is difficult to extract. I

tried it on my own Freflex lenses and could not wear them an hour. The pain and distress lasted a full day. Now I just use surfactant cleaner and peroxide as recommended by the lab.

It occurred to me that there might be other small errata and if readers reported these it might serve to update the article so that it could be used as an office reference.

All the best,
RW Macpherson OD FAAO