

professor René Truhaut
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4, rue de l'Observatoire
Paris (VIeme), France

June 22, 1971

Dear Truhaut:

You are aware, I am sure, that I have been working toward the publication of as much as possible of the material which was submitted to me by the group which participated in the Conference at Amsterdam in November of 1968. It has been a slow and laborious, not to say frustrating, task which is now nearing completion. I must report to you, as a matter both of necessity and courtesy, what I have done, and in particular, what I have done about your own address to the Conference.

First, let me refer briefly to the situation of the Archives of Environmental Health in this matter, and to my reaction to that situation. The policy of the Archives is, first of all, that of reviewing, on its own responsibility, as a fairly distinguished professional journal, all of the material submitted to it and of selecting out that which is regarded as sound and acceptable by its Chief Editor, Editorial Board and selected reviewers, as well. Dr. Boucot, the Chief Editor, was quite cooperative, in that after the responsible editorial staff of the Archives had done its job and made certain recommendations, I was made responsible for carrying out the editorial job. Since the Archives does not accept "Proceedings" formulated by such a Conference as we had, on the authority of the Conference itself, but only on its own judgment of the fitness of the material for publication in the Archives, I submitted all of the material supplied to me by Dr. Malcolm and his group of collaborators, and made certain suggestions for farming it out to reviewers. This, of course, took time, but all of the material, with the reviews, and her advice, were returned to me for handling, with the understanding that I was to act for them, but in accordance with their judgment and the policies of the Archives. (I had fairly good knowledge of these matters, since I had had a hand in obtaining acceptance of the sponsorship of the American Medical Association for the continuation of a journal which had had a distinguished career up to that time, as the Journal of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology). This policy required that the publication should be composed of the acceptable papers of the Conference, with a minimum of discussion and summarization, allowing the papers so selected to stand on their merits, as new and independent presentations of data and interpretations. This policy, construed liberally, has resulted in the presentation of eight of the papers, edited by me to put them into the linguistic and structural form required by the Archives. It was necessary to cut down severely on your address, as well as Dr. Malcolm's review of the discussions, and to confine myself, largely, to revising the papers and reformulating the references to accord with the style required by the Archives. I undertook to put the language of the authors into as good English as I could (without altering the meaning of the original manuscripts). (You will recognize, with your experience, that some of the authors write well in their own language, but have difficulty translating their words into fully acceptable English, while others do very well indeed but write idiomatically

at times.) Some of the papers had been prepared hastily and had to be revised. I believe I adhered very closely to the authors' intentions in every case.

Some of the papers, I found, had been published in full, elsewhere, while one or two simply used data which had been published elsewhere. These papers could be mentioned either by title only, or by citations of other literature. Some of the articles were entirely irrelevant to the objectives of the Conference, while some of us had merely reused items of data that had been published. Consequently, I had trouble in weeding out material unsuitable for publication. I simply did the best I could to act both for the participants in the Conference and for the Editorial Staff of the Archives. I hope I have not done too badly, and above all else, I hope I have served my colleagues in Occupational Medicine, well.

You will identify the skeleton of your address, and I hope you will not feel "let down" by what I have done.

I hope that future conferences of this type will be given a mandate which is conveyed in advance to all participants, and that each participant will adhere to the purposes of the International Association in accord with his instructions. For example, I had no clear idea as to what I was expected to do at this meeting, and I would make a totally different contribution if I were doing it over. I say this not in criticism of anyone, certainly not Professor Zielhuis, but the fact is that this Conference was not a systematic pursuit of standards of safety in Occupational Medicine but rather was a mixture of ideas about lead poisoning, and opinions about the nature of the disease, and pet notions as to supervision and prevention, along with some very good data relating to biological standards. I think we have selected out the best parts of the Conference, and I hope we have presented them clearly. If we have not fulfilled the purpose of the Conference, the fault is mine and I shall not try to palm it off on the Editorial Staff of the Archives.

Finally, let me say that I am convinced from this experience, and from other evidences in the past, that the Permanent Commission and the Association, needs a publication of its own. This, of course, means more money, and I hope we shall soon find the means of financing the justifiable activities of the International Organization.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

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