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PRESIDENT OF
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Dear Doctor Bennis:

I was surprised on finding on my desk a letter (and enclosure) from you, dated in July. This, I'm afraid calls for an explanation, for I can assure you that the days and weeks hardly go by for me at such a rate of speed, as to leave me so far behind. It is rather my slowness that is remarkable. At any rate, the paper which you sent me was read only lately, for things move slowly on my desk. I am much more grateful than my behavior indicates. The fact is that I have been doing some writing, which has taken me back into the details of experimental work carried out some years ago (when I was able to carry out experiments, but was unable to find the time to write them up fully). Now I must do my best to get them out or they will never be published.

In the interim of the past few years (the latter part of my retirement), I have developed some ocular changes which require me to spend hours and days in doing what I did once very rapidly. This is a nuisance, with which I have not yet learned to be patient. Consequently, my performance is a bit frustrating, and I must apologize for it.

Now for the article which you sent to me, and which I have found intriguing. There are, in fact, a series of problems which present themselves, in modern life, in much the same manner as those of fluoridation and radiation, and these are some of the stuff of environmental health (a difficult part). Our modern investigators have developed a great deal of knowledge, along with a great deal of uncertainty about many of the details of the things we know something about. This creates a lot of difficulty in procuring precise bits of necessary information. Inquiring minds can raise many questions which are difficult to answer fully. The whole field of toxicology, for example, when this discipline develops applications for practical purposes in modern life - as in the case of the practical usage of fluoride, mercury, lead and other metals, radiation, a host of toxic chemicals and physical agents (exemplified by laser phenomena) - becomes a source of factors which bear upon the health and welfare of citizens in the modern community, instead of being an intellectual exercise on the part of mere observers. The questions raised have to do with the extreme variability in the behavior of people who work and live in the modern world. When one is known to be purposefully exposed to these agents in the modern environment - instead of merely being exposed to them inadvertently - without knowledge of their existence - responsibility for understanding the effects of such exposure comes into being among certain groups of persons. Such understanding can be obtained, in many instances, only after

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differences in opinions, and all of the phenomena which one sees in the conflicts of "expert opinion," fruitless litigation, and the entire course of floundering humanity. It is, of course, true also that there are extreme differences in the degree of understanding possessed by various experts as well as ordinary non-expert people in the community. It is also true that the value of available information is variable. Some matters, for example, have little significance. For example, the consequences of slightly excessive dosages of fluorides are not very severe, while only slightly excessive exposure to radiation over long periods of time may result disastrously.

But so much for these matters. The trouble is that the proof of many matters is long and hard in coming, while people (including ourselves) must be content to wait for it. Such waiting requires patience, in many instances. But enough for the present. Again my thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
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Occupational Medicine

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