

May 31, 1950

Dr. D. A. Dukelow,
American Medical Association,
Bureau of Health Education,
535 N. Dearborn Street,
Chicago 10, Illinois.

Dear Doctor Dukelow:

I apologize for the delay in my reply to your letter of May 5, concerning information on various aspects of the air pollution problem. The past several weeks have been such that my correspondence could not be maintained.

I should be considerably less than frank if I did not point out the likelihood that other aspects of the problem of air pollution are more important than that of soot and fly-ash. Undoubtedly, from the aspect of dirt and nuisance these are important, but I doubt their significance in relation to respiratory disease. At least let us say that there is no evidence worthy of serious consideration, that these are related in any important manner to respiratory disease rates, and there is no evidence whatever, real or alleged, that greater cleanliness of the air, following smoke abatement programs, has reduced the incidence of such diseases. It would be fine if there were evidence, but I fear we must be honest and put the onus not on ill health but on nuisance.

In general, it appears, largely from hearsay information so far as I know, (I cannot claim any broad acquaintance with this general situation) that St. Louis and Pittsburgh have achieved a considerable reduction in smoke and fly-ash, through the adoption and enforcement of certain ordinances with respect to fuels and their combustion. Certainly Cincinnati has been considerably improved during the past two years, but I have no doubt that part of this derived from the unusually mild winters of 1949 and 1950. The emphasis here is on the elimination of coal of certain specifications, with respect to volatility, and this, no doubt, has been useful.

The literature of the subject is considerable, but I suggest, before you write your article, that you obtain a broader viewpoint on the entire problem by obtaining the Proceedings of the First National Air Symposium - (Exec. Hdq. 612 Flower Street, Suite 332, Los Angeles 14, California - Price \$2.50. I send you a reprint of my paper in this Symposium.) This was sponsored by Stanford Research Institute and the University of Southern California, and was held in Pasadena in November, 1949. The recent Technical Conference in Washington, D. C., was also very informative, but the proceedings will not be available before the lapse of three or four months at a minimum. The Smoke Prevention Association of America held its convention in Montreal last week. Undoubtedly it will issue proceedings. I send you herewith a program

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in which I have checked the names of men in official positions who can supply you with copies or summaries of city ordinances in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. Those and others listed will be glad to send you such literature and references as are available to them. We have accumulated an extensive bibliography in our library. It has not been assembled from the card index and unfortunately our library staff is completely swamped with urgent work that makes it impossible for them to assemble the material on short notice.

May I say, in all good faith and courtesy, that too much in way of speculation and misinformation has been said and written on this subject, and that any article, popular or otherwise, issued by any publication of the A.M.A. should be prepared with considerable care on the background of broad knowledge of this subject. What is really needed is a broad experimental program and a carefully planned survey of the environmental situation, in order to establish the facts and principles which are so sorely needed for the appreciation and control of the problem. We do not know enough to deal with the situation wisely and adequately, and the sooner we realize this, the better it will be for the public welfare, state of mind, and purse. Smoke and soot and fly-ash from fuels represent one phase of the problem, and, I suspect, not the most important one, as I have indicated previously.

I trust my comments may be of some help.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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5 May 1950

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe
Kettering Lab. of Applied Physiology
Univ. of Cincinnati
College of Medicine
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe

Dr. J.F. McCahn, Assistant Secretary of the Council on Industrial Health suggested I write to you for information that would help me prepare a popular article on the control of air pollution. Dr. Bauer, who is editor of TODAY'S HEALTH as well as director of our Bureau, has suggested that I prepare this popular article, directed toward the average citizen, concerning the contribution he might make as an individual toward the reduction of air pollution particularly in the cities. This would be timed for publication at about the beginning of the heating season next fall. I would like to cite the universal problem of air pollution from the thousands of coal burning stoves and furnaces and the addition that the smoke and gasses from railroads and industries make to the load of the pollution of the average community. I would like to point out the means that some cities have used to successfully combat air pollution either by organized programs for control or actual ordinances. If possible I would like to point out the changes in the rates of respiratory diseases that might be traceable at least in part to the air in these cities having a successful program.

It is possible that you cannot give me all of this information but I would at least appreciate a reference from those cities that have had the outstanding programs and the key people I might address for further information.

Very truly yours

D. A. DukeLOW
D. A. DukeLOW, M.D. *rm.*