

February 2, 1971

Dennis Malcolm, M.B., Ch.B., D.I.H.
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Dear Malcolm:

Your very nice letter of January 13 is indeed appreciated, for it gives me to feel that my efforts to serve my colleagues who gathered in Amsterdam in November of 1968, have not been entirely in vain. I only regret that it has taken me so long to do the job required, and that your efforts, so generously given to the group, have not achieved the purpose which you had in mind.

It is most unfortunate that the meeting was not organized and operated in such a way as to make it easier to determine what should be done. I am sure that the failure to do this was related much more to the financial stringency under which Zielhuis operated than to anything else. The International Association has been such an unorganized, or at least such an unplanned, type of organization, having grown out of the arrangements of a fairly arbitrary group of persons in the first place (I say this without being objectionably critical, or in any sense bitter about it), that it will be difficult for it to assume the place which it should and may one day achieve in the world of the medical sciences. The same sort of aimlessness and irresponsibility characterizes the United Nations, or so it seems to me, and I wonder whether this is inevitable in International matters. I hardly think so, but nothing seems to work as it should in a civilized and cooperative world.

However, although this publication in the Archives will in no sense be the proceedings of a medical conference, it will put Occupational Medicine on a fairly good stage, in terms of the best and most informative of the papers presented for the consideration of our colleagues. This, I think, has been worth doing.

I shall write to the men whose papers have been passed up, for one reason or another. Actually, I can tell you, at this time that the papers concerned with concepts of Occupational Medicine in relation to lead were not acceptable to the Chief Editor and the Editorial Board of the Archives, or to me. The decision was left to me originally by Katharine Boucot, who has been succeeded, as Chief Editor of the Archives, by Dr. John Chapman, who has elected (I believe on the advice of the Chief of the Editorial Staff of the American Medical Association) to maintain the decision, as to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts, in his own hands. He has dealt with me in a considerate manner, but the fact is that he can reject anything that I supply to him. As between the reviewers of the Board, the Chief Editor and myself, we shall publish certain papers, and reject all others, or at least fail to publish them for various reasons. Those accepted are as follows: De Bruin, Gajdos, Zielhuis, Beritić (the one on colic versus blood lead), Cramer, Teisinger, Stankovic, Urbanowitz, and yourself. The paper of Hernberg is not being published, because all of the papers reviewed in it had been published previously;

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(I'll explain the matter to the authors, as well as I can, when I write to them); those of Williams and King, as well as of Vigliani had been published elsewhere, while the two sets of data presented by Stopps, as well as my own contribution, were unsuitable for publication, being incomplete. Beritić's paper on the general subject of "Lead Poisoning" was not believed to be suitable for publication. With that decision, I agree. Moreover, the joint paper of Williams and Zielhuis was thought to be a matter of orientation only.

You can see that the papers chosen for publication were not to be regarded as "Proceedings," but rather were independently acceptable pieces of information. This meant, of course, that your summary was not suitable, as it was, and I have taken the liberty of cutting it down to suitable and acceptable size and content, while adding comments of my own, somewhat in accordance with the suggestions made by Doctor Chapman.

I hope you will not feel that the reviewers and the Chief Editor of the Archives, with my help, have emasculated the Conference. The fact is that the Archives simply will not, as I said before, publish Proceedings, as such. I have done the best I could, to prepare for publication the best papers of the Conference. I can say frankly, that the only two of the manuscripts presented, which, in my view, would have gone very well with the others, as valid information, were those of Williams and King and that of Hernberg, but I cannot contend with the policy of the Archives and the A.M.A., of not publishing previously published papers, as well as unacceptable papers otherwise. I will cite the papers presented but not published, and will give the references to those which have been published elsewhere. Moreover, I shall take the responsibility for what has been done, in writing to the men whose papers or other contributions have not been published. Nevertheless, I wanted you to know just what has been done and why, in view of the time and effort which you have expended in doing what appeared originally to be the intention of the group. The only thing I shall assign to its proper agent, is the policy of the Archives, so as to make clear the limitations under which I have acted.

I think we shall all be the wiser when, or if, this matter comes up again. I have expressed myself in the deliberations of the Association, that it should have its own means of publishing its own material. This has not seemed to be feasible, thus far, but I still believe that this is the only way in which it can take its proper place in the sun. I am the more of the same opinion in view of this result.

Sincerely yours,

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

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