

March 15, 1949

Mr. H. G. Dyktor, Commissioner
Division of Air Pollution Control
Dept. of Public Health and Welfare
City of Cleveland
1404 East Ninth Street
Cleveland 14, Ohio

Dear Mr. Dyktor:

I am sorry to have been delayed in answering your letter of February 23 containing the draft of the statements drawn up by the Committee on Atmospheric Pollution for the American Medical Association. Dr. McCabe intimated in his letter that you had had a loss in your family. I would like to extend my sympathy to you.

I have reviewed your draft of the Committee report and have made some suggestions for improvement of the wording. I do not believe that any of these involve changes in meaning or content. The copy with the corrections is enclosed herewith.

The only serious changes which I would like to bring up in this letter, which will be distributed to the other members of the Committee in case they wish to make comments, are as follows.

It is my understanding that we had agreed on some statement to the effect that engineering knowledge is frequently sufficient for the design of equipment and processes for the treatment of stack gases to remove objectionable fumes and odors. I consider this to be an important statement and a counterpart of paragraph 8 on scientific knowledge. Unless such a statement is made, little can be offered to industries faced with the problem of controlling a source of atmospheric pollution. I am enclosing herewith and with the copies of this letter, a recent editorial from Chemical and Engineering News which points out the position of science and engineering in the atmospheric pollution problem. It seems to me that Mr. Murphy has stated the case strongly and well. He does not claim that all problems in atmospheric pollution can immediately be solved with an economic return; however, the new developments in the equipment for handling large quantities of gases hold out much hope for the solution of these difficult problems at a cost commensurate with the price that the public is willing to pay for improved living conditions. Not all of the solutions to these problems will yield an economic return. Too much hope has been held

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forth in the past for this. The examples that have been cited are attractive, but in the future they will have to be considered as exceptions to the rule. Air pollution control, in the long run, will cost industry and the public.

You will note that I have also suggested that paragraphs 7 and 8 be combined so that they read as follows:

"Scientific knowledge is generally available for developing acceptable methods for measuring air pollution. However, there is a need for work to develop standard procedures for sampling and for assessment of dust, aerosols, and gases in the atmosphere so that comparisons between different areas may be made."

I suggest that the new paragraph on engineering knowledge be brought in immediately after that on scientific knowledge.

Finally, I question whether your paragraph 12 will not defeat the purpose which we had in mind. Should we have an educational program to tell the community that the elimination of air pollution is economically impracticable? I am not so sure that it is impracticable. This involves all of the costs of air pollution, including the effect on the health and well being of the public. Can this be evaluated in dollars?

I trust that these remarks will be of some value to you.

Very truly yours,

H. F. Johnston
H. F. Johnston

Professor of Chemical Engineering

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Enc.

cc - All Committee Members

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