

July 3, 1972

Mr. K. W. Nelson
Department of Environmental Sciences
American Smelting and Refining Company
3422 South - 700 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Ken:

Thanks very much for your letter of June 22 and its enclosures. I can see from these that the matters in El Paso have turned out very well.

With reference to my illness and the question of your responsibility for contributing some stress to my activities, let me absolve you from all such responsibility. I had been doing such work in consultation as had come my way for some time, and I did not and do not now regard it as any particular stress. The work I had been doing, on my own, in preparing for the publication of the work of a number of years, might be so regarded, perhaps, although I do not think so. I was not overburdened and beaten down by work. Rather, something of a strange type overtook me. I did not have the ordinary type of "stroke," based on general vascular disease. There was no hypertension, no diffuse vascular disease, and on regaining consciousness, I had very little - almost no - residual effects in terms of destructive processes. My eyes have given me difficulty, and still do, and certain other, mostly sensory, disturbances are a source of trouble, but this was no simple cerebral accident. I am at some loss to explain what actually happened to me. I doubt that I shall ever find out. However, I am quite sure my problem was not overwork or readily visualized stress. So you need not feel any responsibility for my difficulties.

I shall not comment, at this time, on the problems at El Paso or on the report which you sent me. I'm not up to writing long letters, or to engaging in critical scientific analysis. Perhaps, I could do so, but I am determined not to get involved in stressful work for some time. A number of problems could be investigated and discussed, in the literature, but these would lead to more and more involvement, and I should soon be working as before. On this account I welcome the interlude presented by the International Congress in Buenos Aires. It will not involve me in anything new or exciting. I can do as much and as little talking there as I feel up to, and certainly I shall postpone my getting back into the harness of working full time, until I have returned home in the early autumn. I must then submit to a very complete "going over" by my doctor friends, and be prepared to follow their advice for my immediate future.

I expect, therefore, to keep up on what is going on in fields in which I am concerned, without exerting myself unduly. I am convinced that we will find ourselves deeply involved in environmental problems which are being handled by an irresponsible bunch of young members (and old members too) of the governmental agencies. Somewhere the bungling has to stop, if we are to emerge as a nation competent enough to handle our difficult and neglected environmental problems. With kind regards,

Sincerely,

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AMERICAN SMELTING AND REFINING COMPANY

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

3422 SOUTH-700 WEST, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84119

June 22, 1972

SON
DIRECTOR

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe
University of Cincinnati
Kettering Laboratory
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Dear Bob:

Thanks very much for your letter of June 9. I am sadly remiss in not writing to you before now, but I was keeping informed on you and your remarkable recovery through frequent meetings with mutual friends.

It was many weeks after your accident before I knew anything had happened to you. By then you had returned to Cincinnati. And it wasn't until the AIHA meeting, the last week of May, that I learned from George Rousch that your illness had actually begun during my last telephone call to you about the El Paso situation. I've had pangs of conscience ever since, wondering whether your efforts in helping us with El Paso had anything to do with the illness.

I intended to write to you then, but immediately after the AIHA meeting my wife and I traveled to Tokyo, where I gave an air pollution paper, then to Nagasaki for first-hand information on environmental cadmium contamination near there, and then, as a last bit of business, to Taipei and southwestern Taiwan to visit an area where arsenicism from naturally-contaminated well water has apparently caused, and is still causing, vascular disorders (arteriosclerosis obliterans and thromboangiitis obliterans) leading to amputations. I hadn't quite believed the one publication I'd seen on this and I was not prepared for the sight of about 30 men and women in a charity hospital who had recently lost assorted limbs. Some of them had hyperpigmentation and keratosis, so there seems little doubt that arsenic is at the bottom of all this though there may be other factors.

Dr. Wen-Ping Tseng, chief investigator of the arsenic problem, deserted all his normal medical and teaching duties in Taipei to spend a 16-hour day as my guide and instructor and even tried to pick up all the checks. Such kindness I've rarely experienced. And he knew I was an engineer, not a fellow physician.

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From Taiwan my wife and I went on to Singapore where we were joined by our daughter, Karin, who came down from Bangkok. Then all of us went to Djakarta, Jogjakarta and Bali where the senior Nelsons said farewell to daughter after having failed to persuade her to come home and resume something approaching the normal life of a 25-year old. She insisted on continuing her solo travels to study the art and culture of people in every country she can manage to visit on what money she has been able to earn intermittently in Japan these past 10 months. She's had relatively little help from her parents.

We taught Karin to be independent but now I think we overdid it.

Back to the El Paso nightmare. It's over. Attached are releases sent out early in the trial and after settlement. They tell much of the story. The ten weeks of trial record would fill a wheelbarrow.

The kids are all right. Neither the city's nor our pediatricians could find symptoms caused by the lead absorption. Dr. Bertrand Carnow of the University of Illinois said flatly that any blood lead over 27 $\mu\text{g}/100\text{ g.}$ in a child meant lead poisoning, but he was alone in his opinion and the judge didn't believe it. The news media, however, insisted on referring to "lead-poisoned children."

I'm glad to hear you're going to Buenos Aires. I had hoped to but doubt now that such a trip will be possible. I am tentatively planning to attend a symposium on lead to be held in Amsterdam the first week of October. A summary of the paper enclosed will be presented there. If you have time to read it, I'd welcome your comments. The Company and I are not proud of the high blood leads and several anemia cases found, caused mostly, I believe, by the deterioration of usual controls during the phasing-out of operations, but they occurred and I believe all the facts should be reported.

Once more, it was a great pleasure to hear from you. I was touched by your feeling, totally unnecessary, that you deserted us in El Paso and that you had amends to make. That kind of sense of responsibility is most rare, especially these days, and I fully appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Ken

KWN/bbc
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