

January 2, 1958

Dr. R. T. Johnstone
Brockman Building
520 West Seventh Street
Los Angeles 14, California

Dear Red:

I am inclined to doubt your wisdom in writing to me for advice on the desirability of your bringing out a new edition of your book, but I appreciate the implied compliment, on the one hand, and I'm entirely willing to give you my views, on the other, for what they may be worth.

Yours is a good and valuable book, quite as much, in my mind, for its viewpoint, as for its factual information. Since it derives this value from yourself, and from your personal and professional approach to the day's work, it will not be advantageous to dilute it with the contributions of others. An author's book for general reference can never be either complete or up to date, and therefore its special virtue lies in the mental quality of the author. The "multiple author" reference work has no such quality and serves a totally different purpose, and therefore it is up to date, as far as it goes, or it is worthless. To me, the issuance of a text book is a hopeless situation - that is to me, as author - and I shall never let myself be involved in it. I would limit myself to published articles and monographs. That is why you may be ill-advised in writing to me, about this, for I am prejudiced. However, I am not prejudiced, I believe, on the foregoing aspect of the matter. I would say, without qualification, that you should either write the new book yourself, or let the older edition stand for you. Surely a new book by yourself would be an improvement over the old in many ways, as our information has deepened and widened, but your work is still in many libraries and is being used and is still exerting its influence on viewpoint.

Now, as to your own effort, I will make a few additional remarks which may or may not be welcome. They are as personal as I am, and therefore they need not apply to you at all. If I were to embark on such a job as you have in mind, I would do it with one main purpose in mind; namely, that of giving the practicing physician - not the specialist in occupational or environmental medicine, but rather the physician who works in industry and deals with environmental problems whether or not he really intends to do so - what he needs to know about what he is doing and should do. With this idea in mind, I should tell him how to practice occupational medicine as a consultant to one.

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Dr. R. T. Johnstone - (2) - January 2, 1958

a few, or many industries - how, in fact, you practice occupational medicine. So far as I know, there is no work that appeals to a physician and tells him how to use and develop his existing skills as a doctor and his native talents of curiosity and his ability to get along with people, in applying preventive as well as clinical medicine in the new environment of our times. This part of the book would stand for a long time to come, as the bible in the non-specialized aspects of occupational medicine. It could be used in undergraduate medical education, and yet serve as a reference work for practicing physicians. Its goal would be to provide what every doctor should know about the practice of environmental medicine - its philosophy, its technique, and some of its basic information with instruction as to where to go to get the information that is being added year by year through investigations in the laboratory, the clinic, the hospital, the industrial plant, the farm, and the community.

There is no book of this type, and your book, which leans heavily on clinical medicine, and therefore is not unknown to clinicians nor foreign to their thinking and performance, would make a good play for the attention and interest of physicians, and would hold them with its specialized information while guiding them in their viewpoint toward preventive medicine.

You have now had the benefit of my advice on how you should write a book for me. Take it or leave it, as I know you will. If I have contributed a morsel which you can use, do so. If I have not helped you at all, forget the advice and just remember that I tried. This is all that a friend can do in all honesty and sincerity. The giving of advice usually represents either one's deliberate effort to support the views which the seeker for advice is believed to hold, or an earnest attempt to fasten one's own views upon him. I have tried to avoid both of these. To the extent that I have followed the second course, I am, at most, only mildly emphatic. If you should be interested in what I have said, I'll be glad to discuss the matter at greater length in Milwaukee or later.

With kindest regards to Orpha and yourself, and with all good wishes for both of you in the New Year,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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