

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



COMMENTS ON THE REVIEW OF NUCLEAR POWER AND THE PUBLIC

Dear Sir:

In the review of the above-referenced book by Charles Kelber in the September 1971 issue of your magazine, I find his statement that I revealed "a common point of view that standards and regulations are imposed to establish the maximum that you can get away with" was wrong and very unfair.

Had Mr. Kelber not taken a single response directed at another point entirely out of context but rather reviewed my paper in detail, he would have read various statements such as:

"Thus, although the government regulation for radiation doses contributed by a nuclear plant to any neighbor is 500 mrem/year, designers would attempt to keep the plant discharges below 5 mrem/yr to any neighbor averaged over plant life in order to make the contribution of the nuclear power plant insignificant (approximately 1 percent of allowable) with respect to the exposure the public normally receives." (p. 19)

"Under normal operation there are traces of radioactive releases, but they are always well within release rates established by the AEC. In fact, they are kept at insignificant levels." (p. 18)

"The design of nuclear power stations ensures that the total waste release—whether gaseous or liquid—is always well within the specified regulations of the AEC. In fact, as one would certainly expect, every feasible effort is made to minimize wastes which might include radioactive materials, in order to make radioactive waste discharge as small as practically feasible. Thus, the radioactive wastes of the nuclear power station are insignificant with respect to other radioactive considerations had the plant not been there at all." (pp. 9-10)

"Every effort has been made to keep this release insignificant relative to natural background." (p. 8)

"The systems provided for waste disposal are based on extremely conservative design criteria, and all existing regulations with respect to release are complied with by large margins." (p. 25)

How Mr. Kelber is able to make the statement he did about my attitude based on a review of the book *Nuclear*

Power and the Public, containing the above quotes, is very difficult to understand. I did make the statement, "My primary responsibility as a designer is to check my design against appropriate regulations." I wouldn't retract that statement. How else would I be able to state that "all existing regulations with respect to release are complied with by large margins"?

Mr. Kelber's interpretation of my statement is unfortunate. In fact, with this review given the distribution it enjoyed by placement in your magazine, many members of the nuclear community who have always been committed to doing the job right were very disappointed.

If Mr. Kelber is simply inferring that sometimes our good intentions are misinterpreted due to our imperfect selection of words, I stand advised and will try harder in the future to make sure the proper attitudes of the nuclear industry are clear.

A. P. Bray

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October 20, 1971

REPLY TO COMMENTS ON THE REVIEW OF NUCLEAR POWER AND THE PUBLIC

Dear Sir:

Mr. Bray is understandably upset that I did not give greater emphasis to his speech, an eloquent exposition and defense of current practices in the nuclear power industry, than I did to his answer to a question about people's attitudes. But there are two considerations: Mr. Bray's well-deserved reputation and high standing in the nuclear community hardly need my endorsement in a journal addressed to that community; we know that he and his cohorts throughout the industry do a good job. Second, the central issue with respect to the public's view of our industry is often our attitude as much as it is our practice.

When Mr. Bray's questioner was taking him to task for not knowing some special data (p. 115 of *Nuclear Power and the Public*), his stated reason was: ". . . to see how the participants approach the problems that they work with as men." Mr. Bray's reply: ". . . My