

PDR

John F. Hennessey
P.O. Box 2, Box 23
Big Lake, Minn. 55309

Dec. 26, 1973

Ms. Dixie Lee Ray, Chairwoman
U.S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Ray:

Are you listening?

I am writing to you, directly, to express the views of the nuclear engineers at an operating plant (Monticello), these are our own views and not necessarily those of our employer. We are asking for a complete review of the present policies which have apparently put much of the nuclear industry on a head-long, collision course with an endless and needless amount of "paper work". The current infatuation with "Quality Assurance" must be checked, while we agree that some aspects of plant operation do indeed require additional quality control, everything does not need quality control (not all barns are red). I suggest that you take a few minutes and read Minkler's article in the Dec. '73 issue of Nuclear News. Too much valuable time is being wasted by operating staffs in a futile attempt to stay ahead of the "paper tiger", while taking time from the staffs actual operation of the plant. (Note: some would say, then the utilities must expand their staffs to get the job done, this is an irrational attempt to justify continuance of the above policies).

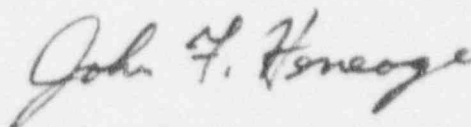
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Finally, I thought your "defense" of the nuclear industry on Face the Nation, Sunday, Dec. 30, 1973, was very good. I am indeed encouraged when I see irrational questions answered in a rational, accurate manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John F. Hensage". The signature is fluid and written in dark ink.

John F. Hensage
Nuclear Engineer

John F. Heneage
Rt. 2, Box 23
Big Lake, Minn. 55309

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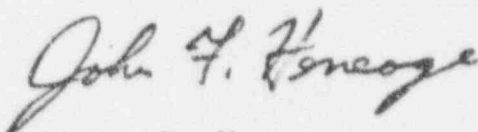
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John F. Heneage". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

John F. Heneage
Nuclear Engineer

J. Leverage
SLE, RR 2, Box 23
Big Lake, Minn. 55309



Ms. Dixie Lee Ray, Chairwoman
U.S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D.C. 20545

MINKLER

Elementary pile theory

While Christmas shopping in nearby Blightsburg last week, I decided to visit the XYZ Engineering Company, which has subcontracted many experiments to our privately endowed Research Foundation.

We hadn't heard from XYZ in several months, and I thought I'd drum up some good will and possibly a little revenue.

But as I strolled down Cesspool Avenue toward XYZ's main gate, I noticed that the familiar yellow-brick administration building was gone. So were the technical staff building, the two labs, and the old process development shop. In their place was a huge steaming mountain of fertilizer, tended by a gray-haired man in dirty blue coveralls. He was shoveling fertilizer into bags.

"Hello," I called in great surprise. "Where's the XYZ Company?"

"This is it," said the wizened shovel

operator. As he turned toward me, I recognized Phil Litmus, XYZ's brilliant senior chemist.

"What happened?" I stammered. "Have you gone into agricultural engineering?"

"Nope," said Phil. "Procedural shock. Hold this bag open for me and I'll explain."

As I grasped the top edges of a burlap sack, wincing against the aroma, Phil said, "When our company started 30 years ago, we were an excited, barnstorming bunch. Our technology was new, and we made lots of mistakes. But through sheer dedication and common sense, we designed good products."

"This gave us another commodity called 'experience,' and someone said, 'Let's write our experience down, so we don't make so many mistakes.' So we wrote reports to each other. This took time from our design work, but dedica-

tion and common sense pulled us through to more good products.

"It also gave us more experience, and someone said, 'Let's codify our experience into formal manuals and procedures so we don't make any mistakes.' So we did.

"By then, demand for our products had put us on a greuling commitment schedule, and reading the procedures (let alone trying to understand them) took so much time from design work that something had to go.

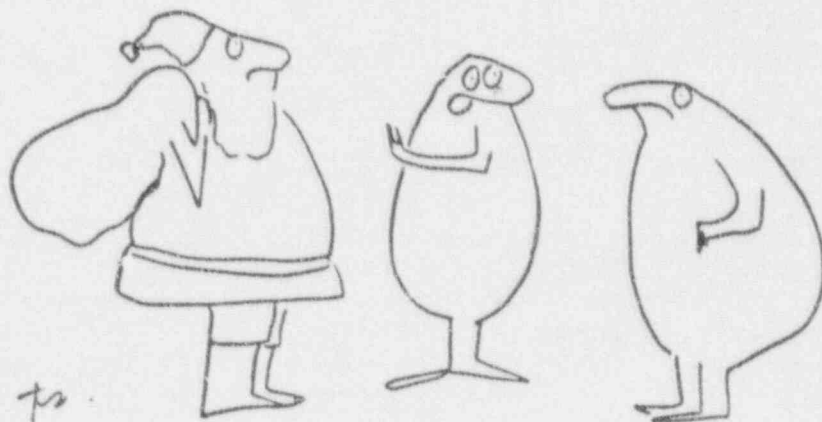
"The thing that went was common sense. With rules to guide every step, who needed it? But when the common sense went, so did the dedication. This precipitated even more regulations, and all thoughts of imagination, technical excellence, personal contribution were buried in a bitler, deadly serious game of Follow the Procedures.

"As the procedures burgeoned, they became even harder to follow. And by this past September, so many signatures, check lists, and approval forms were required even to take out a library book, that work ground to a halt. No one could move without violating some rule.

"Then one morning we came to work and found our entire company had collapsed into the mountain of soil enrichment compound that you see here. Most of the employees went into shock, but as a chemist and former farm boy I'm used to the fragrance, and I've stayed on to make do with what's left.

"This is a particularly rich area we're standing in. Used to be the Commitment Control Audit Department. Would you like some to take back to your Research Foundation?"

"No thanks," I said. "We've got enough of our own."—Bill Minkler



"He wants to know if it's okay to go down the Rio Blanco chimney."

Readers are invited to contribute short humor pieces, in verse or prose, for use on this page. Items should be sent to: Editor, Nuclear News, 244 East Ogden Ave., Hinsdale, Ill. 60521.