My dear Hutt,

Thanks for your letter. I am glad you looked up Nature, if only to see Penrose's little contribution. Part of the trouble has been that the Statistical Unit of the M.R.C. has consistently played down the great difference in lung cancer incidence between town and country, I suppose in order to emphasize the observable but much smaller difference between smoking classes. Of course one of the obvious guesses suggested by the urban incidence is atmospheric pollution, and inter alia the many tons of finely divided soot which fall annually on each acre in urban centres. This, of course, contains a great many strange elements - heavy metals as well as organic compounds. If they had not been so slovenly in their statistics as to think at first that smoking in all forms was equally associated with lung cancer, I doubt if they would ever have conceived the idea that tobacco smoke was even an important contribution to the total atmospheric pollution in cities; still less that it was the nucleus of the noxious effect.

I have myself fairly often used the case of chimney sweeps as evidence that soot should not be ignored as a potential irritant. Penrose quite typically ignores the lowered incidence of cancer among those who inhale.

I am enclosing the two additional offprints of Letters to Nature.

Sincerely yours,

Encs.