

June 11, 1936

Mr. H. F. Leary
Hot Springs Laboratories
Hot Springs National Park
Arkansas

Dear Mr. Leary:

I am very sorry to inform you that my supply of reprints of the article on normal lead etc. which appeared in the September 1933 issue of the Journal of Industrial Hygiene, is exhausted. I am unable, therefore, to comply with the request in your letter of May 25th. Allow me to point out, however, that there is little or nothing in this series of articles which has a direct bearing on the limits of tolerance for the safe use of lead in cosmetics. Our studies were limited to the ingestion of lead by normal individuals by reason of the lead content of the food, and to the inhalation of lead in certain industries. As a matter of fact it does not clear up the subject, but merely opens it for further examination. The question of what quantities of lead can be regularly absorbed by individuals without injury is one which deserves a great deal of attention. It is impossible at this time to predict what the safe limits are. One merely knows now that more lead is taken in by normal individuals than was formerly believed. One also knows that this has been the case for a long time. The limits of safety in industry have been tentatively established in relation to inhalation. This has no necessary bearing on the limits of safety by ingestion.

I must say, in order not to be misunderstood, that I share the feeling of the Pure Food and Drugs Administration in Washington that it is necessary to be extremely cautious in the matter of unnecessary and avoidable human exposure to lead compounds. There may be good reason for going carefully on the questions of tolerance in the case of food material, particularly where in some instances lead compounds are very difficult to avoid. I must confess I see no reason for liberality in relation to such relatively unnecessary articles as cosmetics. I see no excuse for permitting even a question of safety to exist in connection with materials of this type. You may be interested in knowing that we are planning a fairly thorough-going investigation of the limits of safety in lead ingestion with food material. We hope thereby

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to shed some direct and clear light on this question.

Very truly yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.