

April 14, 1939

Mr. F. E. Wormser  
Lead Industries Association  
420 Lexington Avenue  
New York City  
New York

Dear Mr. Wormser:-

I am already familiar with the article by Dr. Horatio B. Williams to which you referred in your letter of April 8th. As a matter of fact, Philip Drinker of the Journal of Industrial Hygiene asked me to review the article for their abstract service. I did so but I found it necessary to review it at some length in order to cover the matter adequately, and there was not room in the Journal for an abstract of the size I provided. Accordingly the review will not appear. I have no objection, however, to sending you a copy of the review which expresses my point of view about the whole paper quite clearly.

As to the best tactics for dealing with a misleading article of this sort, I feel that it is the better part of wisdom to devote as little attention to it as possible. Any attacks which are made upon it will only bring wider and more concentrated attention to bear upon it, and will cause it to be disseminated much more widely. Moreover I think you are not justified in taking too seriously the mouthings of Dr. Logan Clendenen, and various other syndicated medical writers. The greater portion of all that they write is trash and is quite generally recognized as such by well informed persons, and is ignored completely by a very large proportion of the population. To attack these gentlemen, or even to try to modify their statements, is only to give them more publicity, and by irritating them to produce an augmentation of their efforts rather than a reduction. With these ideas in mind, I wrote to Drinker when I sent in my review, and suggested at that time that in my opinion such a review would result in attracting more attention to the article and would tend to give it much greater significance than it deserves. With all due respect to Dr. Williams, who is a charming old gentleman, the article itself can be regarded as fairly adequate evidence of the senile changes which were largely, in my opinion, the basis of his complaints. I should hesitate

to say this publicly and I would not want you to quote me, for my statement is not for any purpose other than to explain Dr. William's somewhat bizarre symptoms and somewhat romantic article. You may be interested in knowing that practically everyone with whom I have talked concerning this article and who is in any way familiar with the experimental background of this field, is of substantially the same opinion as I. I think, therefore, no very serious damage will result from the publication of this somewhat unfortunate article. I should suggest, therefore, that you ignore it so far as any formal or published review or criticism is concerned.

Very truly yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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