

December 20, 1949

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dr. R. M. Andre, Supervisor,
Medical Section,
The Industrial Commission of Ohio,
Columbus 15, Ohio.

Dear Doctor Andre:

I write this letter under confidential and personal cover since it concerns a matter that obviously should be kept within the profession at this time. This enables me to leave the matter entirely in your hands, and at the same time to point out that if it were possible for me to do anything else, I should be glad of the opportunity to do it.

My attention has been called to the fact that Doctor Spence, who is a local medical consultant of the Industrial Commission, has hardly conducted himself, from the aspect of medical judgment and performance, in such a way as to be a credit to the organized activity in which you are deeply concerned. Part of my information is purely hearsay, but a part of it has come from the direct observations of professional colleagues whose ability and honesty are not open to question. In connection with cases of lead poisoning, Doctor Spence has committed himself in words and for the record as believing that lead intoxication always results in prolonged, if not permanent, disability. This is a point of view which might be held on the basis of the careful examination of patients over some considerable period of time, or an extensive experience in the lead trades. It so happens that Doctor Spence does not actually examine most of the persons on whom he passes in this regard, and that his experience in the field does not entitle him in any way to the expression of opinion which he expresses. Under the circumstances, and without going into details, I am quite convinced of his incompetence and of his almost utter lack of judgment, in these regards. I think this is an unfortunate situation in this community, and I am also sure that it has very serious significance in relation to the policies and decisions of the Commission.

You may be aware of the fact that one of the local companies, through certain of its representatives for insurance purposes, feels itself agreed in this matter. This is no part of my concern, for I do not speak of any economic problem in this regard except as it may relate to the squandering of the funds available for compensation. My attitude toward industry, in this regard, is a very simple one. Their problem is that of the elimination of the hazards of lead

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poisoning from their industry. This can be done, and unless an industrial organization does this, it can obtain very little sympathy from me for its legal and financial troubles in this relationship. I do think it is disgraceful, professionally, to have work of this sort done by representatives of the Commission, and I think something should be done about it.

I have no way of knowing what might be done or how it might be done, but I have considered it my responsibility to bring this matter to your attention. If you care to suggest some other means of doing something about it that will come within the limits of appropriate professional methods, I should be glad to have you do so. Moreover, if I could be of any assistance to you in this matter, I should be glad if you will let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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Dictated but not read.

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