

April 29, 1971

PERSONAL

J. F. Cole, Sc.D., Manager
Environmental Health
International Lead Zinc Research Organization, Inc.
292 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Jerry:

First, let me thank you for the check covering my expense to Albany. I prize this the more, for the simple reason that it represents the continuation of my association with you and your people. You may not appreciate the fact, but there is an increasing tendency to become, or to seem, somewhat isolated from the realities of life, when one draws away for a time, whether to write or to study, or merely to move about to a lesser degree. I've been up to my neck, and as busily engaged now and there and all over for so many years that I'm afraid I notice the difference, sometimes acutely.

However, it is not the purpose of my letter to talk about myself. I am, rather, stimulated to write because of a letter which I received recently from a man named Douglas, of whom I know very little, who raised some questions of me about standards for lead and other metals which can be leached out of glazes on earthenware and ceramic products for household use. I remember that you were speaking some time ago of your interests and those of ILZRO in relation to the Ceramic group and their action in relation to the permissible level of lead in extracts from glazed tableware. I did not follow this up at the time with you, but I am intrigued by the prospect of further investigations not only of lead but also of other metals in glazes. Dave Yeager, to whom I turned over a couple of teapots recently, manifested a considerable interest in this matter, especially when I gave him the letter from Douglas and my reply.

I cannot but wonder what is going on in this matter, and what the prospect may be for further investigation. I am also considerably bothered by the willingness of the ceramic group to adopt 7 ppm as a satisfactory requirement. This, in my view, is asking for trouble, and I think it will certainly come. I would not trust this standard for a moment, in the practical sense of achieving a reasonable degree of safety, and certainly on both practical and theoretical grounds, they are laying themselves open to severe criticism. They should know better than this, and since apparently they do not, they need to be guided better, if only for their own sake.

I am not writing to Mr. Mervin about this, since I do not wish to create an awkward situation. However, I would appreciate it if you would do two things: (1) let me know the nature of the present situation, and whether I can, at this late date, do anything useful; and (2) tell me whether there is any prospect of support from them or from ILZRO, for some further investigation of this matter. /I assumed from

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what you said (and failed to say) that some such investigation was being supported by yourselves, and I have not the slightest intention of intruding into this in any way. As you will know well, I make no attempt to direct any of the affairs of this Laboratory. I only continue to look into the matters on which I have been working, and I do intend, so far as I can, to see that the nucleus of the people who have worked with me, have the means of continuing to do so, so as to keep this a place to which industry and industrial leaders can come for help and advice.7

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

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