

October 21, 1940

MEMORANDUM

To: The Director, National Institute of Health

From: Surgeon Paul A. Neal

Subject: Lead and Arsenic Tolerances

1. On August 29, 1940, the Administrator, in a memorandum to the Surgeon General, requested "the Public Health Service in view of the urgency and importance of this problem to continue this investigation. I urge that a final report and recommendation be submitted not later than July 1, 1941, so that hearings may be announced immediately after that date."

2. On September 10, 1940, the Surgeon General in a memorandum to the Administrator stated that "it is doubtful whether a substantial increment to our knowledge of the subject is obtainable in the nine months remaining in the present fiscal year. Since the National Advisory Health Council of the National Institute of Health meets at Bethesda on September 17, I plan to discuss this subject with them..."

3. In a memorandum from the Surgeon General to the Administrator on September 25, 1940, the Surgeon General advised the Administrator that he had conferred with the Council, and on recommendation of the Council he appointed a subcommittee to act as advisors to Public Health Service on this problem. Dr. Carlson was elected chairman of the subcommittee.

4. This subcommittee with members of the National Institute of Health conferred with Mr. Coy and Miss Switzer, and Mr. Campbell and Dr. Calvery of the Food and Drug Administration on September 17, 1940. In substance Dr. Carlson, on behalf of the subcommittee, stated:

- (a) No promise as to progress or discovery in research could be made.

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- (b) Research should be continued in the Public Health Service on these substances.
- (c) The Public Health Service should not be put in a position to recommend a legal standard before we have actual information.

This conference agreed that the following question be submitted to the subcommittee:

"Does there now exist sufficient reliable information on the resistance of man to the injurious action of lead, arsenic, and fluorine so that the Administrator may, with assurance of safety to health, proceed with the hearing, looking toward early establishment of a legal tolerance for added lead, arsenic, and fluorine in foods?"

The subcommittee, after a digest of available data, will submit a written report through Dr. Thompson to the Administrator.

5. Dr. Carlson is to come to Washington to work in his capacity as chairman of the subcommittee.

As you will note from the above and from the minutes of the conference with the National Advisory Health Council (September 16, 1940) and also from the request of the Administrator on August 29, 1940, and from Mr. Coy on August 26, 1940, there are inconsistencies regarding the responsibilities and duties of the four-man subcommittee.

As noted in Mr. Coy's memorandum to the Surgeon General (August 26, 1940) and minutes of the Surgeon General's conference with the National Advisory Health Council, scientists who are not members of the National Advisory Health Council were to be added to the subcommittee. I recommend that the following scientists be considered for these appointments:

- (1) Dr. Joseph C. Aub, (Harvard University)
- (2) Dr. W. A. Ruth, Chief of Pomological Physiology,
(University of Illinois)
- (3) Dr. H. H. Mitchell, Department of Agriculture,
Urbana, Illinois, (University of Illinois)
- (4) Dr. E. L. Belknap, 231 West Wisconsin Avenue,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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