The Lowe Brothers Company
Dayton, Ohio
Complete file - physical reports, etc.

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DONALD A. KOHR
PRESIDENT

CHARLES W. PARROTT
VICE-PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

THE LOWE BROTHERS COMPANY

DAYTON, OHIO, U.S.A.

MANUFACTURERS OF PAINTS, VARNISHES AND LACQUERS

General Offices · · 424 TO 450 EAST THIRD STREET

January 21, 1941.

Dr. William F. Ashe,
Kettering Laboratory,
College of Medicine,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Ashe:-

Enclosed is your copy of the minutes of the meeting last Thursday.

I want to repeat here what I told you before you left that we were very much pleased by the way in which you handled the question of the necessity of our workmen taking the precautions required to keep them in good health. You made this plain to them I think and did so without giving them the impression that our plant is a dangerous place in which to work from the standpoint of the health of the workmen.

We are continuing our investigation of the best method to lessen the dust concentration in our mixing room and one or two other places, but have not as yet reached any conclusion as to the method we will follow.

Yours very truly,

DAKohr

DAK-REM
Enc.

MEETING OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE LOWE BROS. CO.

DAYTON, OHIO.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1941.

MR. DONALD A. KOHR, presiding.

MR. KOHR: In the spring of 1937, most of you will remember, we had a health survey, or hygienic survey, by Dr. McCord, who went over our working conditions in our plant and who at that time examined several of our employees. When we had a general meeting in March of this year, at the time that we opened our locker room and this room, I promised you then that we would have another health survey and we have had that survey made by Dr. Kehoe and his assistants in Cincinnati. Dr. Kehoe, by the way, has an international reputation on occupational diseases.

At that time, when we had that survey made, there were quite a number of our people who consented to have physical examinations. They went to Cincinnati with Mr. Clark and examinations were made of them at that time. Until today they had not received a report of the examinations. The reason for that was, there were several things that delayed us and we felt that it wasn't fair to a workman or to anyone, for that matter, to get a doctor's report on the examination without having the opportunity of discussing that report with the doctor who helped to make the examination. The doctor who made the examinations, or who helped in the examinations is

here today and has discussed with all of those men that needed any discussion their reports that they have received and are now in their hands. When I spoke about the locker room and the facilities that we have made available there, I emphasized the necessity of all of the people who work in a factory like this to be careful of their health. It is true that some of the raw materials that are used in the manufacture of paint are injurious to a human being, if those raw materials get inside of him, either through his mouth or through his nose, in the form of breath that goes into his lungs. I wanted someone who knew a little bit more about such things than I do -- quite a little bit more, I think -- to say a word to you on that subject, and Dr. Ash of Cincinnati, associate of Dr. Kehoe, is here today and he is going to speak briefly to you on that subject. Dr. Ash!

DR. ASH: The study which we made of this plant was done in this manner: A number of men from the various parts of the plant, representing each of the types of occupation which each of you do, were examined and studies of their blood and urine and so forth were made, to determine whether or not any of the dozens of things to which you are exposed will in any way injure your health. Now, it is extremely commendable that Mr. Kohr and his company are willing and interested in spending a good deal of time and money to make that kind of a study. I am not a part of this corporation and am here only because I am interested in the health of people working in factories. Whether you know it or not, no matter what kind of a factory you work

in, be it paint plant, paper mill or gun powder factory, there are certain things in those plants which are potentially injurious to your health, if those agents get inside of you in one way or another.

We have studied these men to determine how much of the things to which they are exposed have gotten into them. We have studied the general set-up of the plant to see whether or not the things that are here are being properly handled, and we have studied the air you breath to determine how much dust it contains and whether the things that are in that dust may be in any way injurious. The results of those studies are briefly, as follows: In this plant there is no more evidence of serious exposure to chemicals detrimental to you men than in dozens of other plants of this type in the country. It is a good clean plant. There are agents here, however, which are to you potentially dangerous and the company has made in the past, and is still making every effort to cut down those dangers as far as it is possible to do so.

We have recommended that in certain parts of the plant they make a study to find out whether or not better ventilation is possible. I am not an engineer, I don't know whether it is apt to be so or not, but that study is being made. That has to do largely with dusts containing lead containing chemicals. But the large problem of avoidance of exposure to dangerous chemicals now lies with you men. The dangers are not great. The plant is well fixed up to avoid them, but a good many of you men who are working here are working either with powdered chemicals, with solids, or semi-liquid pigments that you get on your hands and which get into

intestinal tract and is potentially dangerous. plant is in

That has happened and will happen to all of you to a small degree, but there is no evidence that the amount of material you are taking inis of sufficient quantity to do you any serious harm. There are, however, two or three or four places in the mill where the amount of dust to which you are exposed and cannot help but be exposed is very high, and I want to recommend that in those parts of the factory where

true, when there is special apparatus made

form of special ventilation or particularly f

that those masks be worn. The reason for t

to protect the company against anything, but to protect you against illness in the future.

Now a good many of you fellows have worked here

the air you breath. The breathing problem is being studied carefully for ventilation in those places where it is bad, but the bigger problem is what you fellows do from day to day about the kind of agents to which you are exposed.

Now we will take a specific example. Suppose a fellow is working in the mixing room and he is emptying pigment in the vat and it is a hot summer day and he is sweating and from time to time he wipes the sweat off his face with his hands. He may have a good deal of pigment on his hands which gets into his mouth. That is something no amount of prevention will prevent, unless you fellows take care of it yourselves. When you get into the locker room to change your clothes, if you aren't thorough and careful about your washing, you will carry home a certain amount of that pigment in your nose and mouth and it will go down in the gastro-

more than ten years and you haven't lost a day in all of that time on account of illness. So, you wonder why I bring up the possibility that you may become ill. None of you have and there is no evidence in the immediate future that you will, but the agents that are here are such that if you are careless you run the possibility of becoming ill. And I am not here to scare you. I am merely here to tell you that this study was done in the interest of protecting your health, not only today, but in the future, and your care in handling those materials which are dangerous is the main thing which will make the working conditions here better in the future.

I am sure that Mr. Kohr and his staff are going to continue to carry out our recommendations on the problem of ventilation. But the job of personal hygiene, keeping clean, keeping these things out of your mouth and out of your nose, is entirely up to you fellows from now on. The plant is in good shape. The general health of this group, the ones I examined, which is a representative group, is excellent, better than many other plants, but keeping it that way is largely dependent upon you fellows.

If you have any questions about any specific thing I may know about, I will try to answer them. If I can't answer them, the stenographer is taking down the information for you and I will try to get the answers for you.

MR. KOHR: Don't hesitate if you want to ask questions. Dr. Ash is here and he will be glad to try to answer them. I just want to emphasize what he said, that this is not a one-sided proposition. We want to do our part to keep you men well, but you must do your part, if you are

going to keep well. If you eat lead and drink the various materials and get sick, that is your fault, not ours. If you want to eat it, you can, there is plenty of it here. It is dangerous, we want you to keep away from it.

Any questions? (No response.) Looks like we have answered all of them already. If there are no questions, we will adjourn, and if any of you men were a little modest and didn't want to ask a question before all of us, you can come up here after we adjourn and ask the question in private.

And thereupon the meeting was adjourned.

This seems to be a most unusual of broken English! A.