



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Kettering Laboratory, College of Medicine, Eden & Bethesda Aves.

March 16, 1970

Professor Dr. R. L. Zielhuis
Coronel Laboratorium voor Arbeidshygiene
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Eerste Constantijn Huygensstraat 20
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Dear Zielhuis:

I wish to report to you on the progress of the preparation of the material of the Conference in Amsterdam for publication in the Archives of Environmental Health. First, let me say that it has taken more time than I had expected to get this done. When the sheaf of manuscripts came to me from Malcolm with his summary of the proceedings of the Conference, I forwarded them with a letter to Dr. Boucot, Chief Editor of the Archives. I commended them to her attention and offered such assistance as she might wish to have. She wished to have them reviewed by the staff of the editorial board plus any other persons whom she might ask to do so, and requested of me a list of the persons whom I thought to be of use in that manner.

The papers then were duplicated in sufficient number for this purpose and sent out to reviewers for their comments and advice. Meanwhile, I went to the International Congress in Tokyo, and on to Australia and New Zealand, returning at mid-November. When I returned, and corresponded further with Dr. Boucot, we agreed that she should send the papers to me with the comments of the unidentified reviewers and that I would act as the "guest editor" for the purpose of putting the entire lot into appropriate state for publication in a special number of the Archives in which only these papers would be published. There are here matters of form required by the Archives (i.e., type of tables and figures, manner of citing references, structure of manuscript and linguistic style) which make it necessary for me to rephrase and restructure some of the contributions without altering the substance of the authors' offering. This, I believe you will agree, is not an easy task, but I think I can achieve it without sacrifice of the intent of the contributor.

During the past two months of our stay in San Francisco (where Mrs. Kehoe and I have gone during the worst of the winters in Cincinnati for the past four years), I have been working fairly steadily (I am interrupted very little by other matters here) on this job. I now have a fairly good grasp of the problem presented by the attempt to portray the results of the Conference, in view of the varied quality and substance of the papers, and the irrelevance of some of them (as to the objectives of the Conference, as I now conceive of them), on the background of the comments, criticisms and suggestions of the reviewers. Some, for example, have been recommended for rejection, others have been approved for publication with recommendations for alterations, while others have been commended highly. The fact is, however, that the individual reviewers (nor even the Chief Editor) do not see the group of papers as a whole, and do not

understand what they are meant to cover. That is, the objective of the Congress is not apparent and, therefore, the contribution made by individual papers to this objective is not evident. A concept of the situation has taken form in my mind, as I have been editing the individual papers, or considering them, otherwise, which I wish to present to you for your consideration and advice.

It is my opinion that what we were attempting to do in Amsterdam, was to create a document which would set forth the principles by which the health of men who work in the lead-using industries can best be protected. As an incidental matter, not without importance, we were bringing together the best available and most recent evidence on the alterations in the biochemistry and physiology of man (and experimental animals) induced by the absorption of lead, as a clue to the measurement of the risk involved in various types and degrees of exposure to lead prior to the occurrence of clinical manifestations of lead intoxication.

With the foregoing matter (or matters) as a theme, the relevant contributions of the participants of the Conference should be put in the form required by the Archives without any distortion of their writer's intention. The irrelevant contributions, several in number, as well as those which are not acceptable as contributions because of their poor quality, should be mentioned only in a review of the proceedings. Let me be specific here. Several of the papers have been recommended for rejection - not always, in my opinion, for entirely satisfactory reasons, despite the apparent validity of the scientific reasons stated. In this category, at this point in my own view, are two papers which cannot be published. These are:

(1) A paper by T. Beritić, entitled "Compensated and Decompensated Action of Lead Upon Human Erythropoiesis." Without going into details, this paper contributes nothing new to our knowledge, while the idea of the "Compensated and Decompensated Action," is a philosophical notion without practical worth, even as hypotheses. I respect Beritić as a clinician, and I am sorry to arrive at this conclusion, but this paper should not have been written.

(2) The paper of Albahary, entitled "Views on Actual Occupational Lead Poisoning," which was thrown together hastily and indeed carelessly, and is unworthy of Albahary. I could not hope to revise it to make it acceptable, although I would be glad to do the necessary drudgery if I could accomplish a suitable result. It will be much better for everyone concerned, including Albahary, who is a delightful person, if this paper does not appear in print.

Papers which made no contribution to the purpose (objective) of the meeting, in my opinion, and would require a great deal of alteration, which I am not capable of providing, are the following:

(1) Lehnert's manuscript on "The Lead Intoxication - A Cybernetic Problem." This paper may be ever so erudite, although I may be privileged, in my ignorance,

to doubt it, but it says nothing to me which is of use in the prevention of lead poisoning in industry. I strongly suspect that it should be published; (like many another person, I tend to be impressed by matters which I do not understand), but it should not be included in this series of publications devoted to a specific purpose. It can be mentioned, respectfully, in a summary of the proceedings.

(2) Kosmédér's paper on "Long Term Exposure to Lead Intoxication and Atherosclerosis" can not be said to be irrelevant to our subject. On the other hand, it cannot be claimed that it offers anything new or unequivocal on this subject. It is very much too long, and would require a tremendous amount of editorial work to make it acceptable, in the formal sense, for publication in the Archives. It can be published elsewhere I believe, and I think it should not be included in these papers.

Still another pair of papers, those of Mr. K. Williams (not the one written with you, which I shall mention later) should not be published in the form in which they have been submitted at the Conference, if for no other reason than that the information has been published more fully and in much better form in the British Journal of Industrial Medicine, under the title of "An Investigation of Lead Absorption in an Electric Accumulator Factory with the Use of Personal Samplers." Volume 26, page 202, 1969. Abstracts of these papers can be included in a summary of the proceedings, but the Archives should not be expected to "republish" data which have been published elsewhere. (Dr. Boucot may decide otherwise, as is her prerogative as Chief Editor of the Archives, but I have stated my view to her, and I doubt that she will differ.)

The same fate, in my view, much as I hesitate to be arbitrary, should be prescribed for your "position" paper, written with Williams. The views expressed in this paper are not (and I believe, cannot be) documented. I differ with them only in a few matters of detail, but that is not the point. This was something intended to influence (and correct) the thinking (and writing) of members of a group which had come together for a specific purpose. I would not wish to be responsible for publishing it as the consensus of our views, and even if it were such a consensus, I would not like to present it to the scientific and professional world for their guidance.

I have now presented my views and my problems to you, for any comment or suggestion which you wish to make. I propose to put together a document which will present the relevant and productive results of our Conference in an acceptable form, without bending their interpretation to accord with my own views. This will enable us to do our duty to the International Association, and also to our colleagues in the field of Occupational Medicine.

I am prepared to handle the matter of the rejections of specific papers by the Archives as you may wish. I'll take the responsibility for writing to the authors if you wish me to. Or you can act, if you choose, in this matter, on the full information which I shall give you when and as a decision has been made, or later, when the entire job is done. Otherwise this would have to be

done in a formal way by Dr. Boucot, and this might create some understandable irritation within the group of conferees.

I should be grateful if you would reply to this necessarily long letter as promptly as you can. I shall be returning to Cincinnati on March 18, and will continue there at my usual address for some time to come. I hope to get this job behind me, in large part before the middle of May, and therefore I shall need your advice - unless you are in agreement with my proposed handling of the publication - in proceeding.

With kindest regards and with my assurance to you that I shall do my best to promote your purpose in assembling this Conference.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe ^{wp}

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

RAK:wp

Dictated but not read

KE 0019413