

Lead Industries Association

420 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, N. Y.

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TREASURER

March 9, 1940

Mr. Robert A. Kehoe
College of Medicine
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

I wonder if you have had an opportunity to read an article which appeared in the January 20, 1940 issue of the "Journal of the American Medical Association" entitled, "Toy Dishes and Plumbism" by Rathmell and Smith, which appears on page 242.

I have had to read it because this was the basis of some nationwide publicity under the pen of Dr. Dafoe, in his syndicated medical column and also over the air under the auspices of the American Medical Association's radio service.

Frankly, the article does not impress me as a careful bit of scientific observation. If the conclusions reached by Messrs. Rathmell and Smith are correct, then it seems to me that every child in the United States should have acute lead plumbism every day because I am quite confident that the amount of lead that is found in every-day food, whether or not it is in obvious contact with lead, is more than the 0.0113 mg. of lead in the 20 cc. of orange juice which is alleged to have been responsible for the attack of acute plumbism of the 22 months old child. How such a minute amount of lead could cause an acute attack of plumbism, which passed away so quickly, is beyond my comprehension.

I am also puzzled with the fact that even if the child squeezed the orange juice in a lead-bearing toy, the chances are that the orange juice did not stay in the container very long and was consumed quite rapidly before the orange juice had an opportunity to dissolve in lead. I am also puzzled by the prompt manner in which the illness of the child was diagnosed as acute plumbism based on the symptoms described. It strikes me as these symptoms might very readily be caused by infected food or some other cause.



Dr. Kehoe:

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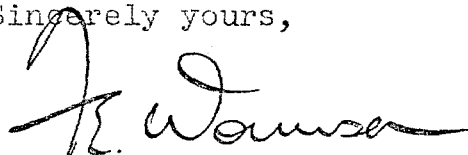
As you know, we are opposed to the use of lead in children's toys.

From what I have learned as a layman studying the subject of lead poisoning many years and benefitting from your own invaluable studies and that of other competent workers in the field whose careful investigations and conclusions I respect, it does seem to me that this item makes out a very poor case.

I am anxious to have your own comments for I may be wrong in my judgment.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,



Secretary.

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