

August 26, 1957

AIR MAIL

Dr. E. V. Brumbaugh
Commissioner of Health
Health Department
City of West Allis, Wisconsin.

Dear Doctor Brumbaugh:

I must solicit your forbearance with my long delay in replying to your letter of May 8th. Various circumstances have made it impossible for me to maintain my correspondence during recent months, and only now, in the interludes of a vacation have I had a chance to deal with some of the neglected items.

The problem with which you appear to be faced may be a difficult one for economic reasons, since the industrial people concerned with the reclamation of used lead appear to have some difficulty in making a profit unless they cut corners. I cannot vouch for the economic necessity, for what I know about this has come from the statements of relatively small operators. What I do know is that there is no technologic reason why they cannot abate the nuisance of which you speak. There are adequate engineering means by which the escape of noxious and unpleasant odors can be prevented. This is merely a job for a competent engineer.

I cannot appraise the significance of your problem nor can I suggest any specific remedy or remedies for it on the information which you have given me. I know full well that some complaints of this type are unjustified, while others are amply based on unnecessary nuisance and sometimes even on unhealthy conditions. In still other instances damage to property and vegetation is evident. The severity with which the situation must be handled will depend, of course, on the degree of nuisance, discomfort, hazard and damage. It would appear, however, subject to the dictates of good judgment, official responsibility and reasonable consideration of the equities of any situation, that the public health authorities have the power to close down, temporarily or permanently, any industrial operation that is carried on in disregard of the public interest. If this Company is not able, through economic stress, or ignorance, or proper concern, to handle its operations properly, it shall be compelled to obtain the funds, the technical advice and help, and the interest in survival that would enable it to carry on properly. I realize that such

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industries contribute to the economic status of the communities in which they operate. This is reason enough to regard them with a degree of tolerance if they are trying with reasonable competence to solve their problem. If, however, they continue to disregard good technical practice and the users of good neighborliness, they have no reason to complain if they are compelled to mend their ways or quit their operations.

If you need information and advice on this matter it can be had from a number of sources, such as your State Health Department. We could make a preliminary survey of the matter at some cost, but I believe you can obtain the help you need nearer at hand and at little or no cost.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK:ss

Dictated but not read.

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