

September 3, 1942.

Colonel C. F. Shook,
Office of the Surgeon General,
War Department,
Washington, D. C.

Re: SPMCY 457.-1

My dear Colonel Shook:

The question raised in your letter of August 27, is one which has been brought to our attention by a number of distributors of pharmaceutical products, toilet articles, and by at least one food distributor. Others have pointed out that materials other than tin have been projected for use in lining lead tubes. Apparently none of the tubes have been wholly satisfactory, since because of the manner of expressing the contents, fissures tend to develop, exposing the lead to the action of the contents.

We do not have any precise information on the extent to which various materials come to be contaminated with lead compounds in this manner. We have suggested to some of the groups involved, the necessity of carrying out carefully controlled analyses on certain of their products, and in a few instances have offered to make a few check analyses for them. We have received no further information, however, and we have not examined the matter ourselves, since without information or direct access to materials we should be wasting our time. I have no doubt that some information is available.

In my opinion the danger is not as great as might be thought, and if a proper selection of the contents were made, such tubes should give rise to little trouble. However, the matter should be investigated systematically, since materials will vary in their action, and since time will be an important factor. This, I think, could hardly be done adequately except by some agency of the Government, or by someone authorized by the Government. I may be asking for trouble, but if any means could be developed whereby we might be able to get at this problem on a systematic basis, we might undertake to obtain the information most urgently needed.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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