



Westinghouse Electric Corporation

June 27, 1962

East Pittsburgh, Pa.
Telephone: EXpress 1-2800

Dr. R. A. Kehoe
Kettering Laboratory
Eden and Bethesda Avenues
Cincinnati 19, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

During a discussion with Dr. Harold Schrenk recently with respect to evidence that indicates whether or not metallic mercury can be absorbed through the unbroken skin, as a result of people making prolonged skin contact with metallic mercury such as placing their fingers in the mercury. It seems to be questionable at the present time at least so far as the literature is concerned. Dr. Schrenk believes he remembers a paper that you gave several years ago in connection with this particular problem, but does not remember the exact results that were obtained from your detailed study. We have not been able to locate a published article of your report.

I will greatly appreciate your recommendations. If you believe metallic mercury absorption can occur through the unbroken skin, I will greatly appreciate your expression of reasons for this absorption and the kind of evidence that confirms such a conclusion.

The reason for my making this request is that we are seeing an elevated excretion rate in urine samples from people that are working with metallic mercury. There is considerable skin contact with the material during the day; this means about an hour skin contact with the mercury. I realize there is also some possibility of mercury absorption by breathing possible mercury vapors. However, the ventilation seems to be excellent and the mercury is at room temperature. I also realize there is some possible ingestion from possible particles clinging to the skin. However, we have been strongly emphasizing the washing of hands with a good powdered soap such as Sugar Beet Products Company's SBS-11 which has good rinseability too.

I would also be interested in knowing what method of analysis your laboratory is using for detecting mercury in either blood or urine. We are presently using the Campbell method that was developed at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory.

Since your laboratory is doing various types of analyses, I would be interested in knowing your charge rate for various types of analyses,

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Dr. R. A. Kehoe

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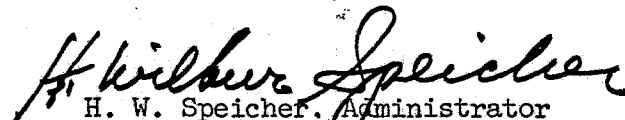
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particularly for a comparison study that I am presently making in the cost of doing such analyses in my own laboratory in comparison to commercial sources.

Any information you can let me have will be very greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC CORPORATION


H. W. Speicher, Administrator
Industrial Hygiene

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