

AP 60220 U.S. Public Health Service
(THE METABOLISM OF LEAD)

N13345

August 19, 1966

Re: AP00220-1-5

R.S. McCutcheon, Ph.D.
Executive Secretary
Toxicology Study Section
Division of Research Grants
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Dear Doctor McCutcheon:

I enclose herewith two (2) copies of a report of our progress in the investigation of "The Fate of Inhaled Particulate Lead Compounds", together with a description of the work to be done during the next year or more.

I send also certain reprints of publications which have appeared in presenting the related work of previous years, as a means of connecting up the several phases of an experimental program which has been under way for many years.

As I have indicated previously, the published material does not cover the scope or the productivity of the work done; and I am working toward a prolonged period of study and writing which will enable me to prepare a monograph on lead (occurrence in nature, metabolism in man, in health and disease, clinical lead poisoning, diagnosis and therapy, industrial hygiene in the lead trades, lead in the general environment of man as a problem of public health, supplementary information as to certain physiological indices based on daily observation of industrial employees and experimental subjects). Moreover, the progress report does not portray the physiological significance of the specific experiments with which it deals. It is, rather, a description of procedure and a report of results. However, I have presented the case, as I see it, for the application of the results of these investigations toward the development of a criterion as to the satisfactory quality of the ambient air, with respect to its content of lead, under general environmental conditions comparable quantitatively with those which now exist, with particular reference to the content of lead in food and beverages in the United States. It has seemed to me that the latter discussion has direct pertinence to the question of the practical usefulness of the information which is being sought and obtained in these experiments.

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Some members of the Toxicology Study Section will be aware no doubt, that the validity of our ideas and our work has been called into question recently. (The direct statement, unfortunately, I think, has been squelched in the interest of certain public professional conventions and good manners, but there is no gainsaying the impression which has been conveyed. It has been assumed, both tacitly and overtly, even by some who should know better, because of the sources of our financial support during the prosecution of the major portion of our investigations on lead, that both our views and our work leave a strong bias. I am neither surprised nor deeply moved, personally, by these manifestations of professional shortsightedness and official cynicism, but I do not take the position that one is lacking in grace or poise in defending his ideas. The truth does not survive, of itself, against the attacks made upon it, even those that are blatant and noisy; it must be restated and held up to view. It is largely useless, of course, to testify to ones own integrity; only time and the testimony of others, hopefully others of sound critical judgment, will avail in this matter. As to the quality of the work which we hope carried out and expect further to carry out, I make no secret of my interest in the approval of the Public Health Service (as expressed through its mechanisms for applying expert professional critique to the consideration of proposals) of the objectives and the design of our experiments. I have been pleased to set forth our purposes and procedures in such detail as may be useful. If I have failed in any respect in this intention, I shall be glad to respond to questions or criticisms as fully as possible.

I am leaving for London, Vienna (International Congress on Occupational Health), and later, for pure pleasure to Greece, on September first, to return in late October. Should you wish additional copies of publications and of this report of progress my office will see that your wishes are met.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

RAK:wls

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