

LEAD INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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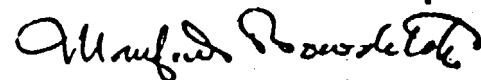
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LEAD HYGIENE and
SAFETY BULLETIN
No. 112

To the Members of the Lead Industries Association:

"THE LEAD HYGIENE CONFERENCE OF NOVEMBER 1958"

The letter reproduced herewith seems to warrant submitting to our members the address to which reference is made. In this, the undersigned sought to bring out certain aspects of the recent conference not apparent from the record already published, and to call attention to the marked advance, in no more than two decades, in industry's readiness to discuss its hygienic problems quite openly. Mr. Schall has been by no means the only one to compliment the Association on this score.



Manfred Bowditch
Director of Health and Safety



THE LEAD HYGIENE CONFERENCE

OF NOVEMBER 1958*

Manfred Bowditch

Quite a few of us who are here today attended the Lead Hygiene Conference of which I have been invited to speak. As a concluding part of that conference, Dr. Thomas Shipman summed up most ably what had gone before. The greater part of what was said on those two November days has been published in the March, 1959, issue of "Industrial Medicine and Surgery." An amplified and corrected edition of the Conference Proceedings will presently be issued by the Lead Industries Association. It is obviously impossible even to summarize, in the brief time available to me, the twelve papers whose delivery and discussion held our attention for ten full hours.

Here, then, are five reasons why, at the risk of apparent departure from my program assignment, I believe that I shall serve you better by giving no greater part of these few minutes to a recapitulation of the several topics of the conference than to what might be termed its philosophical background.

Rather arbitrarily, let us place the twelve subjects in three groups, the first comprising those dealing with lead hazards in industry, the second with lead hazards to children, and the third made up of those which cannot be neatly fitted into either of those two boxes.

In the first, or industrial group, were four papers, Dr. Elston Belknap's, discussed by Mr. W. M. Pallies, on controls in the storage battery industry, Mr. Russell Frank's, discussed by Dr. C. E. Hine, on controls in the making of ceramics, Dr. Robert Kehoe's, discussed by Dr. D. J. Lauer, which was a progress report on the lead inhalation experiments at Kettering, and that of Dr. Lee E. Miller, discussed by Dr. Harriet Hardy, on the EDTA therapy as used in industry.

In the group primarily applicable to the childhood aspects of plumbism can be placed only two papers, that of Dr. Hugo D. Smith, also discussed by Dr. Hardy, on the uses of EDTA in pediatric practice, and Dr. Anna Bastjer's, discussed by Dr. Julian Chisols, on the effect of temperature on lead poisoning. Significant of present interest in these childhood aspects, of the extent of the discussion consequently evoked by these two papers, and of the adjustment required of those of us who have thought of plumbism only in industrial terms, was the comment heard at the close of the conference, that "the pediatricians seemed to have pretty much taken over the meeting."

- * Delivered at a joint session of the American Industrial Hygiene Association and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, Hotel Sherman, Chicago, April 28, 1959.

Greatest in number and by no means least in interest were the six papers less readily classified, that of Mr. Dohrman Ryers, discussed by Mr. Kenneth Nelson, on the value of blood lead analyses, Dr. Hervey Elkins', discussed by Dr. Herbert Stokinger, on the use of red lead paint in potable water storage tanks, Dr. John Foulger's, discussed by Dr. Louis Spolyar, on precautionary labeling, Dr. Rutherford Johnstone's, discussed by Dr. Lloyd Haslin, on diagnostic errors, Dr. Helmut Schrenk's, discussed by Dr. May Meyers, on hygienic lead standards, and that of Mr. Theodore Waters, discussed by Mr. Arthur Johnson, on what the lawyer sees reflected in the many facets of the lead toxicity problem.

Only the speakers and discussion leaders whose parts in the conference were announced in the program have in the above been named. The degree of audience interest in what they had to say is attested by the unheralded and no less welcome participation of thirteen others, Dr. J.C. Aub, Dr. R.F. Bell, Dr. R.K. Byers, Mr. W. C. L. Humeon, Dr. D. P. Langenour, Mr. P. F. Murphy, Dr. C. A. Nau, Dr. Paul Resnikoff, Dr. H. W. Sanford, Dr. H. H. Steinberg, Mr. Carl Walters, Dr. W. C. Wilents and Dr. Huntington Williams. To those who spoke and to those who discussed, to Dr. Shipman for his summation, to Mr. Ziegfeld and Mr. Wormser for their introductory statements, to Dr. L. C. McGee and Dr. G. M. Wheatley for their able chairmanship, and finally to Mr. D. M. Borcina for his meticulous concern for its physical requirements, to each of these forty-two must go a full share of grateful credit for the success of the conference.

So much for the affair itself. Let us now consider some aspects of its genesis. In the April 18th issue of the Saturday Review, Elmo Roper, noted public opinion consultant, discussing the changes in business attitudes since the times of "The public be damned," adduces evidence of "the emergence of an entirely new concept of corporate responsibility," and opines that "some of the corporate reports being issued today would have caused the business tycoons of Commodore Vanderbilt's day to shudder." Dr. Shipman, in his summation of the November conference, set forth the view that "there are few industries that are as ready and willing to air and discuss their problems as the lead industry." Be that as it may, Mr. Robert Ziegfeld, Secretary-Treasurer, in his opening remarks, described our group as a non-profit organization of some seventy lead mining, smelting, refining and manufacturing companies, with such varied functions as sales promotion, research and technical and economic service, which "long ago recognized its responsibility in the field of lead hygiene."

Pointing out that we were gathered in our third major conference on that subject, he then introduced Mr. Felix Wormser, vice-president of the association and of the St. Joseph Lead Company, former Secretary and President of the L.I.A., and, from 1953 to 1958, Assistant Secretary for Mineral Resources of the U. S. Department of the Interior.

Because he so well expressed the association's attitude in matters of lead hygiene, I quote at some length from Mr. Wormser's remarks. After telling of President John Bradley's regret in being unable to be present, and extending for him a message of welcome to those gathered for the conference, Mr. Wormser said:

"It doesn't seem possible that twenty years have elapsed since the first conference of physicians and surgeons of member companies of the Lead Industries Association was held here in Chicago at the Palmer House. It seems like yesterday to me. Some of you in this room today attended that session and you will remember how interesting it was to listen to Dr. Joseph Aub and Dr. Fairhall, who had done so much pioneer work in the field of lead poisoning.

"Years ago, I felt that the Lead Industries Association could justify its existence solely on the ground of the opportunity it had to work in the field of lead hygiene, so that the metal could be used properly and intelligently, and so that, wherever it created a hazard industrially or publicly, the proper controls could be introduced. I haven't changed my views. I think you should know that, as the work of the Association has become known, it has received international recognition and representation. I think we can all agree that the Lead Industries Association, and the people behind it, deserve commendation for the public-spirited and frank approach they have given to the lead problem. When all is said and done, what the industries want is the truth. They can then govern themselves accordingly. Thanks to much brilliant work in medicine, participated in by many of you in my audience, the truth, pleasant or unpleasant, is certainly what they have gotten. I am sure they will also get it from this meeting."

You will have noted that both Mr. Ziegfeld and Mr. Wormser referred to earlier conferences, sponsored by the association, of a similar nature. Of these there have now been five, and from the records of the three major ones, spanning the entire 21-year period and all held here in Chicago, I have culled a few figures which I think will illustrate certain changes for the better which have been coming about in a variety of industries in this relatively short space of time.

Though it is hardly possible to do this with any great accuracy, I have undertaken, for purposes of comparison, to classify the attendance at the three gatherings in two ways. First, either as those concerned with the medical and allied sciences which impinge on these problems, whom I shall term "doctors," or as executives, administrators and others whose interest, no less important, is such as to permit their designation as "laymen." My second breakdown, somewhat less arbitrary, is between those employed by or associated with our companies, our "members," and those not so related, our "guests." With this explanation, let us see what the record shows.

The three conferences under discussion were a closed meeting, in the nature of a round table and with no presentation of prepared papers, on April 6th, 1937, an invitational but little restricted gathering, with eleven speakers and ample discussion, on November 15th and 16th, 1948, and that of last November, again of necessity by invitation, because of the luncheons and other accommodations involved,

but virtually open to any and all who expressed a legitimate desire to come.

At the 1937 conference, of the 50 present, 33, or 66 per cent, were "doctors," 17, or 34 per cent, were "laymen." In 1948, with an attendance of 109, 53, or 49 per cent, were "doctors," 56, or 51 per cent, were "laymen." Of last November's 140 total, 79, or 56 per cent, were "doctors," 61, or 44 per cent, were "laymen." About all that can be deduced from these figures is that there appears to have been a reawakening of interest among the "doctors."

Now, however, we come to the real meat in our statistics. In 1937, 46 were "members" and only 4 were "guests". Eleven years later, the division was nearly equal, 57 "members" and 52 "guests." Last fall, twenty-one years after that closed meeting, there were precisely four times as many "guests" as "members," 112 of the former, but 28 of the latter. Verily, times have changed.

Before leaving the reminiscent phase of these remarks, I would like to add that, of the four doubtless carefully hand-picked guests at that 1937 round table, two were our good friends Joe Amb and Clark Bridges, both of whom were with us again last November. They thus rate the designation of "Oldest living conference guests of the Lead Industries Association," and if either or both are here today, I would like to ask, with the chairman's permission, that they rise and take a bow.

I cannot, in closing, resist the temptation to remark on the gratification with which a veritable barrage of appreciative letters were received in the weeks following our conference of last fall. Thirty-seven, or more than a quarter of those who had attended, took the trouble to so express themselves, and a point accorded major approbation in these messages was that there had been such full and free discussion of subjects which, not so long ago, would have been taboo. To anyone who doubts the pleasure with which one reads such letters, I suggest that he try running a conference of this sort some time.