

January 10, 1939

Dr. Paul B. Newcomb
Defiance
Ohio

Dear Paul:-

I have just seen today a man named [REDACTED] who has a polyneuritis of long standing and who was sent to me by the Industrial Commission of Ohio for an opinion as to whether or not his present condition is due to his occupation, and specially whether or not it was due to lead absorption. On the history of exposure and from the course of his disease, I am disposed to doubt that lead is in any way concerned with his illness, and at this time it would scarcely be expected that a stigma of lead absorption would appear. Consequently I am bound to base my opinion chiefly on the occupational history unless I can obtain some other evidence. Mr. [REDACTED] tells me that you saw him during an earlier period of his illness and that you sent him to Ann Arbor for study. I would like very much to know whether any clinical evidence of lead absorption was found either by you or by the people who saw him at Ann Arbor. I would appreciate very much any information that you can give me for I shall be very glad to give this man the benefit of any doubt in relation to industrial compensation.

As you probably know, lead exposure among garage mechanics is not very great. I have never seen a case of lead poisoning in a garage mechanic except as it was associated with work on storage batteries or unless there was an unusual amount of car-body work involving extensive soldering operations and paint jobs. This man gave no history of any unusual activities as a garage mechanic, although he did lay some stress on the use of leaded gasoline for washing parts. The lead exposure involved in such operations is so utterly negligible that it is not conceivable that lead poisoning could have developed therefrom.

Despite all this negative evidence, if I could find some acceptable clinical basis for the belief that he absorbed significant quantities of lead, I would be pleased to call attention to it as a basis for some compensation to him.

With kindest personal
regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.