

March 28, 1947

Mr. Alexander Stewart,
Director of Research,
National Lead Company,
105 York Street,
Brooklyn, New York.

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Were it not for the fact that I can lay claim to some indirect acquaintance with you, through our mutual friend, Mr. John Schaefer of Ethyl Corporation, I should have some hesitation in sending you herewith a copy of a memorandum prepared by one of my associates in the Laboratory, with my assistance and full approval, concerning a situation that exists in a local plant of one of the subsidiary companies of National Lead Company. This information would normally be directed to the attention of the man responsible for the medical supervision of personnel of your company, but I am not sure that there is a medical director, and therefore I am sending this to you. If I should have sent it to someone else, I trust that you will see that it gets in the right hands.

The memorandum itself is self explanatory, as to its facts and the other information and the conclusions, but perhaps it is worth while to point out that we feel this to be a rather serious and important matter. We have not been able to do anything about it, and we are naturally distressed by the fact that we do not know what, if anything, has been done to deal effectively with the problem. It is somewhat unusual in our experience with industrial organizations, to be dealt with as though we were not to be trusted, and moreover it is not my custom to sit by and hope for the best, when there is something that needs to be done. We have been holding the bag, by attempting to take care of this group of men, against rather serious obstacles. It is this situation, which seems to me to justify a course of action, which might otherwise be regarded as an act of unfriendliness toward a large industrial organization. The fact that none of these men have been able to obtain compensation, to take care of even the minimum needs of the situation, seems to me to be inexcusable, and therefore I have directed a copy of this memorandum to officials of the Ohio State Department of Health and to the Ohio Industrial Commission. Our failure to accomplish anything directly has given me to feel that I must make every effort to assist our patients in their present difficulty, and to promote the safety of the other men who are still working in this plant.

I should not like you to think I am being unduly critical of the local management of this plant. My knowledge of the facts is not sufficient that it would be fair for me to appraise their conduct.

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I am led to believe that they have not had the experience with the hygienic problem involved here that would enable them to deal with it as effectively as possible. I merely wish to see that the facts of this situation get into the right hands, for I feel certain that your organization would not permit the unnecessarily prolonged existence of a situation of this sort, which has such significance in public and employee relations.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kenoe, M. D.

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