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COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

KETTERING LABORATORY
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CINCINNATI, OHIO 45219

June 21, 1968

Dr. Roy C. A. Bock
Box #341
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

Dear Doctor Bock:

I have two very good reasons for wishing to have the information that can be obtained from the examination of the available data at the Baton Rouge plant concerning the concentration of lead in the blood of persons whose occupational exposure to lead has been limited to the organo-lead compounds. The data assembled by Dr. Robinson may be sufficient for my purposes, but I will make my requirements sufficiently clear to enable this to be determined.

First let me say to him and to you, that I have no wish to publish any of these data, at present, and I certainly wish to give full credit to the source of my information. I'm not asking, therefore, that it be released to me for such use as I might wish to make of it. We can consider later how it should be used.

Two incidents have occurred to raise this issue since I visited you. The one relates to an article in J.A.M.A. 204:1002, describing a case of TEL encephalopathy from "sniffing" gasoline, in which the analytical results on the blood seem to be the clinching diagnostic feature of the case in the mind of the authors. I doubt the validity of their interpretation of this case. I don't believe we have ever seen values in the blood of the order of magnitude reported in this instance in relation to any type of exposure to TEL. I could be mistaken, but your data on persons who have had considerably elevated body burdens of lead derived from the absorption of TEL over long periods of time should answer that question satisfactorily. I'd like to take issue with these authors if my opinion can be substantiated.

I would like to examine the results obtained at the same time on the urine and blood of a fair-sized group of our men who have worked solely with TEL. Doctor Robinson's group of long-term workmen (excluding alloy and furnace men) ought to be excellent for this purpose. However, it seems to me that it would be useful, sometime, to assemble all of the data of this type that are available in your hands, so as to determine whether or not there are unusual results among them, and also to be able to establish the relationship, if indeed such exists, between the concentration in the urine and that in the blood.

The other incident has to do with an Oriental graduate student in this Department who came over to discuss the relationship of lead in blood and urine following the absorption of inorganic lead on the one hand, and that of tetraethyllead on the other. His questions arise out of opinions expressed to him by physicians in his country, who believe that there must be some consistent relationship here. I'd like to re-examine the facts here and show him what they are.

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I may be asking for much too much work within your shop in getting at these data, and if so, you should tell me off. If, however, we can get at these matters without undue difficulty, I shall be most grateful.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wp

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