

January 18, 1934

Mr. Philip Drinker
Harvard School of Public Health
55 Van Dyke Street
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Drinker:

I can quite understand the point of view expressed by the editors of the Journal of Industrial Hygiene, that the paper which I have sent you has an apparently greater significance in relation to the public health than to industrial hygiene. However, the paper deals directly with occupational lead exposure, and only indirectly with the exposure of public. The latter in a certain numerical and social sense is the more important, but it has been my experience that the problem of the filling station attendant and the garage mechanic with relation to leaded gasoline has received most attention from medical men. Thus while our studies must recognize the larger problem of the whole community, they have produced information in line with our program of studying the lead exposure of various occupations. They seem to me to be a logical continuation of our previously published observations and I wish very much to have them appear in the same form as our previous articles. If they were to appear in another journal I would feel it probably advisable to amplify the discussion of methods as well as certain details of the results. However, every detail of method (except that of stippled erythrocyte counts, which is relatively unimportant) has been so presented in the earlier series that anything said further on the subject would be only repetition.

I understand the doubt of your editors as to the analytical methods, which I take to be the crux of the whole matter. Their scepticism is logical, since our results are not in accord with those which they have come to regard as correct. The answer to this point, however, cannot be found in our further discussion of our methods or results, but rather in new data which are derived from a critical examination of our methods. We have such data, and in our next paper (in which we shall describe carefully controlled experiments on lead intake and output with relation to certain occupations), we shall set down side by side the chemical and the spectrographic findings on the same samples. It may interest you to know, that our spectrographic data prove that there is a uniform loss of lead in our chemical

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method, and that the results which we have published err on the low side.

With regard to the reduced amounts of lead reported after six months of exposure to Ethyl Gasoline let me point out that the two statistical univers involved are small, and that the results obtained before and after exposure were of the same magnitude statistically. It would be presumptuous, in my opinion, to attempt to explain a difference which may be due entirely to the operation of chance. We have seen significant differences in the lead output of individuals from season to season, with variations in their diet (faecal output) and with variations in urinary volume). (There is a change in total urinary lead excretion as well as in the urinary lead concentration, with gross changes in the water output of the skin). The two sets of observations referred to were at opposite seasonal points. That may be the answer, but I should hesitate to take up the space of the journal and the time of the reader in a serious discussion of such a matter in relation to the data in question.

However I am allowing my interest in the criticisms of scientific colleagues to lead me into the impropriety of presenting arguments which are not necessarily of consequence to the editors of The Journal. Suffice it to say, therefore, that I do not wish to publish the article in a special bulletin, and I will not do so except as a last resort. Nor would I choose the American Journal of Public Health as a medium for the publication of this work. I should not be interested in submitting the article without the tables. I fully realize that the cost of their publication will be considerable. It is not a matter of great concern to me whether the article appears in March or July. This brings me to say that I wish you to publish it, and that I will be glad to pay any amount which I can afford, even to the full cost, in order to have it go along with the other papers. If for any reason you prefer to publish it in March at my expense, please let me know the cost and I will decide promptly whether I can go that far. Moreover, I shall be glad to make such alterations in the manuscript as will satisfy your editorial policy without compromising my own points of view.

Sincerely yours,

RAK:IS

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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