

Lead Industries Association

420 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, N.Y.

CLINTON H. CRANE, PRESIDENT
F. H. BROWNELL, VICE PRESIDENT
F. W. ROCKWELL, VICE PRESIDENT
FELIX EDGAR WORMSER, SECRETARY AND
TREASURER

March 23, 1940

Dr. R. A. Kehoe
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

As promised, I am furnishing you with a copy of the publication of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor and Industry, entitled, "Molten-Lead, Lead Oxides, White Lead and Lead Dry-Colors". I think it is an exceptionally fine paper on the subject and shows how simple it is to take adequate precautions against the lead hazard in a lead plant.

After I left Cincinnati I stopped off in Philadelphia and called on Dr. Rathmell, one of the authors of the paper which you and I discussed in Cincinnati on infant lead poisoning, as Norristown, Pa., was quite close. I found Dr. Rathmell a very agreeable, young man, connected with the Norristown State Hospital for the Insane. I expressed my skepticism of his findings and he told me that the infant in question was his own son and that he, too, was puzzled on how a serious case of lead poisoning could occur from the aluminum play toys.

I asked him to show me the toys, which he did. As I suspected, they are pure aluminum, the kind that I am sure hundreds of thousands of children play with every day and have played with for years. As a matter of fact, these toys were made from a particularly fine grade of aluminum, produced by a very reputable organization. I asked Dr. Rathmell if he had analyzed the toys for their lead content. He said he had and that they contained .23 milligrams in cup and saucer. Conceding the accuracy of his analytical work, this would correspond to spectroscopic amounts of lead and I dare say all aluminum, not to mention copper, zinc and steel contain these spectroscopic amounts of lead. In fact, I know no way, nor does metallurgy today, in which to remove completely these impurities.



KE 0014686

Dr. Kehoe:

-2-

March 23, 1940

This further investigation of the case reinforced my own feeling about the unfairness and unsoundness of the article that was written about lead.

Dr. Rathmell, in extenuation of his view point, asked me whether I had seen Dr. Williams' article on the serious case of lead poisoning that occurred from very minute amounts of lead so that it was quite evident to me that he was swayed in his own study by the professional literature on the subject. That is the unfortunate thing about the entire episode, to my mind, for undoubtedly the Rathmell article will go down in medical literature uncontested and influence the thinking of thousands of physicians who are only vaguely familiar at best with lead toxicology.

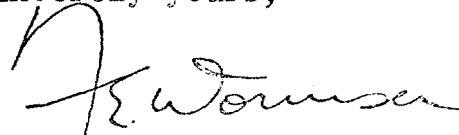
Dr. Rathmell goes on the assumption that his diagnosis was lead poisoning and couldn't be anything else. I told him I only had one regret, that my own children weren't of an age that would enable me to feed them not only one, but repeated doses of lead in a soluble form to the tune of .02 milligrams and I expressed great difficulty in even measuring this minute amount of lead, which would correspond to the size of a dust particle.

The more I study this case the more I am impressed with its absurdity but I imagine it would be rather difficult to have anything done about it because the professional reputation of the authors is at stake.

It was a great pleasure for me to be with you in Cincinnati last Tuesday and I am already looking forward to our next meeting.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,


Secretary.

RE 0014687