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May 16, 1980

Dr. Bernard Sobel
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Dear Bernie:

I have been overtaken in the course of my efforts to prepare for publication, from this Laboratory, a manuscript (which I think will turn out to be a book when it has been completed). In this manuscript, I have, thus far, stated, as clearly as I can, the background of the experimental program, a simple statement of its purpose, a fairly full exposition of the methods employed in the investigation, a full description of its implementation of the work (the respiratory chamber and the accessory equipment for the preparation and administration of the lead compounds.

There remains to be done, the presentation of the data (analytical and medical observations). This information has to be presented so as to illustrate the facts derived from the investigation and in such a manner as not to bore, or put to sleep, the reader beyond endurance. Some of this has been done and the manner of doing the remainder is now apparent. However, while I have been studying this and determining how it should be done, I have sustained a severe loss of eyesight which has stopped me cold for the past few weeks. I have now recovered from this unexpected shock to such an extent as to have solved, I believe, how I can go on, with proper help.

While in the shocked state, I have reviewed some letters and manuscripts (such as I can read with suitable magnification. Among these I have come upon correspondence between you, and Gary TerHaar about work done by Stanley Gross. I shall not go into these letters in any detail, nor shall I about the work of Stan Gross, but the review of these matters has left me with the feeling that I have dealt with you and TerHaar in a manner that please either of you or myself. The fact is that I did not know just how to do this. It was a hard experience to me to find that Stan Gross had no clear idea of what he was doing or of what I had attempted to do. The real medical and hygienic problem was completely beyond him and had been from the start. I could have prevented this if I had been with him from the beginning of his work, or, at least, I believe I could have done this. I could not do anything effectively after he found that he could not remain in Cincinnati and after he had gone. Thus I had to get him out of the work for I could do nothing with him.

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I was not capable of understanding what I should do, and I took a very poor way of handling the matter. That is now over the dam and I do not feel that I can do anything about it. However, I feel very badly about it and up to my last, blind or nearly blind episode, I thought I could mend the matter with you and TerHaar by preparing and publishing a manuscript of my own. Now I am not so sure, for my present handicap is really serious and I shall be compelled to abbreviate my chosen method of handling the manuscript, or perhaps (I am not sure) take a much longer period of time than I had thought would be required to do as I had thought necessary.

Let me say that I have now restudied the data, and I am sure they show what I had hoped they would show. I am sure (in my own mind) that neither you or TerHaar can see, through your own knowledge of the situation, nor through the eyes of Stan Gross, what this work was all about and what the data reveal.

As you and TerHaar know, the statistical (as differentiated from the physiological) approach to this or to any other complex problem, can be very revealing, or it can be obscuring, dependant upon one's appreciation of his technique and his real understanding. The latter is exactly what has been done in this case. That is why, believing what he had done, I thought it absolutely necessary to get him out of it. I tried my best to be a gentleman about the situation, but it appears now that I was the opposite. Unfortunately, he does not understand and now he never will, for he is dealing not only with ideas, but also with techniques, which he does not comprehend.

I should like to know what you and TerHaar think of his publication. He has told me that it has been well received. I wonder what that means or if it has meaning. I am not expecting you to reply to my implied questions, and perhaps it is better to let the matter rest, and I will do so if I must. However, I am not of a temper to do so easily. I very much dislike unsolved problems, especially in such a matter as this, which, in the performance in industry, involves the safety and the certainty of employment, of some thousands of people. This, that is, employment in the lead trades, is the real problem here, far beyond the significance of general air pollution. There is, as we and others have shown, the problem of children, especially neglected children, (whose mothers are employed away from home). But this cannot be solved by the study of the normal (normal behavior) metabolism of lead, but by the abolition of leaded, painting of home interiors (and to some extent the exteriors, as well, to which the young child has ready access). Just how this problem is to be handled is not clear but it is a social problem of the manner of preserving (painting) houses. How does one get rid of houses that were built (painted) years ago and are still lived in, especially in slums in which there is little repainting and even less care in the removal of old paint? Lead poisoning among small children (in case you do not know about this problem) is usually (almost always) a matter of small children chewing and sucking at window sills and other readily accessible projections and surfaces, especially, of course when these babies (so to speak) have ample, unsupervised periods of looking out for their own entertainment or other activity, when mother is employed elsewhere.

Dr. Bernard A. Sobel

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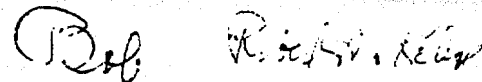
What I have in mind with respect to our reams of data is to present them simply so that they are available to anyone who wishes to study them in whatever way he wishes, after they have been presented in tables or graphs so as to illustrate points of importance, (as for example as they were presented in part in the Harben Lectures). In short, the Harben Lectures, which cover only seven of the sixteen Subjects are to be essentially the model for the total presentation of the data.

If then, you or Ter Haar wish to see what, in my opinion, new monograph should show, in dealing only with the data just look at the Harben Lectures, of which one or another of you have a copy. Or if this is not the case, let me know and I'll forward one or more copies. I have seventy-five to a hundred copies of the Harben Lectures as delivered in 1960, which I'll be glad to make available.

Now, let me ask you a question. If we can reasonably soon make available a book in which all of the Subjects of the group studied can be presented and discussed, as in the Harben Lectures, will you consider that this job has been finished. If your reply is "no", what should be done in addition?

With all personal regards and greetings.

Sincerely,



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

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