

To: Mr. Ziegfeld

December 16, 1952

From: Manfred Bowditch

Subject: 1952 ACTIVITIES

The following is a brief outline of Health and Safety activities during the first eleven months of 1952. A more comprehensive report will be made to the members of our Association when records for the full year are available.

**CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING** This problem continues to be a major "headache" and a source of much adverse publicity, of which the Baltimore publications herewith are but two examples. No accurate estimate of its prevalence is possible, but these figures on 1952 reports from a few communities with which we are in touch will serve to point up its importance.

|                 | <u>All Cases</u> | <u>Fatal Cases</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Atlanta         | 3                | 0                  |
| Baltimore       | 26               | 4                  |
| Boston          | 5                | 1                  |
| Cincinnati      | 12               | 4                  |
| Cleveland       | 16               | 5                  |
| New Castle, Pa. | 15               | 3                  |
| New York        | 44               | 14                 |
| St. Louis       | 61               | 4                  |
| Washington      | 11               | 4                  |
| miscellaneous   | 4                | 1                  |
|                 | <u>197</u>       | <u>40</u>          |

Most of the above figures are incomplete; this is particularly true of those for New York City, which are based on estimates by the Assistant Health Commissioner, Mr. Trichter, whose present illness has delayed the further report promised. Detailed investigation of any such large number of cases to determine their validity would be prohibitively expensive and time consuming, as witness the costs of the current Baltimore (\$10,000 for one year) and Boston (\$2,500 to \$3,000 per year) studies. But granting that many could be shown to be of doubtful validity, this would not lessen the adverse publicity, and it is my considered opinion that we must find means of securing more accurate diagnosis of lead poisoning or face the likelihood of widespread governmental prohibition of the use of lead paints on dwellings.

**INDUSTRIAL LEAD POISONING** Due to widespread lack of knowledge in the medical profession of the causes and diagnosis of lead poisoning, as well as the fact that it is not a reportable disease and the factor of deliberate "covering up," no useful estimate of its prevalence in the adult population is possible. Although its incidence in the painting trade has undoubtedly lessened substantially in the last several decades, Dr. Robert A. Kehoe, Director of the Kettering Laboratory and an internationally recognized authority on this subject, gave the opinion in an address on November 19, 1952 at the annual meeting of the Industrial Hygiene Foundation, of which Mr. Fletcher is the Chairman, that plumbism is as common in industry today as it was in much earlier times.

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