LEAD INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

420 LEXINGTON AVENUE
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LEAD HYGIENE AND SAFETY
BULLETIN NO. 79

Subject: REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

To Members of the Lead Industries Association:

The following is a brief summary of Health and Safety Activities of the Association since December 1, 1949, the date of the last report. Numerically, these activities have again increased, this year by about 12% over those of the year preceding, and it should once more be noted that the ten matters listed at the end of this report have been of collective importance calling for sustained attention outweighing all others combined.

Eleven visits were made during the year to member companies in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Other visits have included fourteen to governmental offices, six to hospitals and clinics, four to educational institutions and one to a non-member plant, in Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, New York, Washington and Midland, Pa.

Twenty-six meetings have been attended. These included the annual meetings of the American Industrial Hygiene Association in Chicago, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers and the American Mining Congress, both in New York, the American Public Health Association in St. Louis, the Greater New York Safety Council in New York, the Industrial Hygiene Foundation of America in Pittsburgh, the Lead Industries Association in Chicago, the Massachusetts Medical Society in Boston and the National Safety Council (including a session with the American Academy of Pediatrics) in Chicago, as well as the Congress on Industrial Health of the American Medical Association in New York. Also five local section meetings of the American Industrial Hygiene Association in Cleveland, New York and Washington and a local meeting of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers in New York. Two governmental meetings, both held in Washington, were a hearing on pesticides conducted by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration and the three-day Technical Conference on Air Pollution sponsored by the Department of the Interior. Committee meetings included one of the Committee on Toxic Dusts and Fumes of the American Standards Association in New York and two of its Subcommittee on Lead in Chicago, one of the Toxic Materials Committee of the National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association in Washington, and one each of the Association's Committee of the National Safety Council and the Advisory Committee to Consider Proposed Rules Relating to the Printing Trade, both in New York. Meetings held in this city by the New York University Postgraduate Medical School and the National Fund for Medical Education were also attended. The writer is currently chairman of the A.S.A. Subcommittee on Lead, served as chairman of the Nominating Committee of the Industrial

Hygiene Section of the A.P.H.A. and is a member of the Committee on Activities of the Section, represents the A.I.H.A. on a Committee on Intersociety Cooperation which includes twelve associations concerned with industrial health, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Metals Section of the National Safety Council and filled a speaking engagement at the Cleveland meeting of the A.I.H.A. referred to above.

Of two hundred and seventy-nine individual matters requiring widely varying extents of attention during the year, thirty-six originated through inquiries from member sources, eighteen from physicians, fifteen from educational institutions, fourteen from governmental agencies, four from journals and seventy-four from other non-member sources, largely manufacturing companies, once more pointing up the 'public relations' importance of the work. Thirty-three were subjects brought forward from the previous year calling for further consideration and sixty were investigations initiated within the division. Numerically the most important were problems of childhood plumbism, air pollution and the toxicity of lead stabilizers.

Again because of pressure of other work, only seven Lead Hygiene and Safety Bulletins have been issued. Though a substantial improvement over last year's five this record is less than was anticipated.

In connection of the ten matters alluded to in the opening paragraph follows:

1. The Maryland 'Toxic Finishes' Law Following a series of four further conferences with governmental authorities in Maryland, the campaign to remove this 1949 enactment from the statute books of the State was brought to a successful conclusion when Governor Hill signed the repealer on March 28, 1950. Anticipation of the Johns Hopkins study listed as No. 6 below was an important factor in this legislative action.

2. Other Adverse Legislation Prospects of promulgation of 'lead labeling laws' in New York and Massachusetts have caused concern and have been the subjects of conferences with authorities in both states. They continue to be watched. Through the cooperation of the Manufacturing Chemists Association and the U. S. Public Health Service, arrangements are under way to secure reports on both state and national legislation of concern to us in the future.

3. New York State Painting Regulations Although word of final action is yet to be received, the onerous and impractical features of the rules of the New York State Labor Department relative to health protection in spray painting have been revised by a committee in whose deliberations we have participated and assurance has been given that these revisions will be officially accepted.

4. Type IV Paint It was reported last year that, despite the long use of red lead paints for interior coating of water storage tanks throughout the United States and the lack of any evidence of harm from this practice, an opinion given by a government scientist had placed the continued specifi-

ection by the U. S. Bureau of Standards of the present form of such paint, known as Type IV, in serious jeopardy. This matter has been the subject of twenty additional conferences in Washington, New York, Boston, Cincinnati and St. Louis and a series of tests of waters exposed to this and other red lead paints is being conducted by Dr. H. B. Elkins of Massachusetts at the Association's behest. Results thus far are so favorable that we have indication from two governmental sources that the Army's objection to the use of the Type IV paint for potable water supplies will in all probability be withdrawn.

5. Reports of Childhood Plumbism. Baltimore continues to be the main source of alleged childhood lead poisonings, with 29 cases and 2 deaths reported to date in the current year. It is anticipated that the study discussed in the following paragraph will clarify both the antecedents and actual extent of this local problem. In the same period Dr. E. L. Byers of the Children's Hospital, Boston, where our Association is partially financing the diagnostic work, has reported only five positive cases and has negated the diagnosis of plumbism in a number of suspected cases. It is to be hoped that this very valuable work may have continued support. A report of an increase in the number of cases at the Children's Hospital in Cincinnati has yet to be confirmed. News accounts of scattered cases continue to flow in from various parts of the country, sometimes at the rate of fifty clippings a month. Whether justified or not, these obviously constitute most adverse publicity and warrant every effort to find effective preventive means.

6. Proposed Study at Johns Hopkins. As a method of securing a sound evaluation of the Baltimore problem referred to above, our Association offered early this year to support an investigation by the Departments of Physiological Hygiene and Maternal and Child Health of the Johns Hopkins University of all cases of childhood plumbism reported by the Baltimore City Health Department. Despite continued efforts to get the study under way, including a series of fourteen conferences, unanticipated conditions at the University rendered this impossible. In the light of very recent word from the head of the University's Department of Pediatrics, it is now anticipated, however, that an early start may be made if adequate support is assured.

7. Parental Education. The only seemingly feasible means of coping with the childhood plumbism problem is that of parental education. Admittedly difficult at best, every applicable medium should be explored. Two leaflets published by the National Safety Council are the only ones having suitable reference to this subject thus far seen, but the booklet tentatively promised by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company a year ago is in the making and efforts are under way to bring about adequate handling of the subject in similar publications of the Prudential Insurance Company and the Children's Medical Center in Boston. Once these are available, the widest possible distribution should be secured.

8. Motion Picture Proposal. Efforts to further the proposal to sponsor the production of a sound motion picture, to be shown to medical students and before meetings of medical societies for the purpose of inducing sound thinking and correcting the many misconceptions prevalent

in the medical profession on the subject of lead poisoning, have continued. With a view to economy in production costs, three additional producers have been approached, but the prospect of any substantial saving without loss of quality and consequent effectiveness seems remote. Further conferences have been held with representatives of the American Medical Association, which is eager to cooperate in sponsorship, promotion and distribution of the film. Mr. Fletcher's strong support of the project at our annual meeting will be recalled. Both from the viewpoint of the financial savings inherent in the prevention of misdiagnosis of plumbism and that of enhancing the prestige of our Association, the value of such a picture is so great as to seem the most important single step that could be taken in the promotion of lead hygiene.

9. Lead Poisoning Antidote The renewed joint support by our Association and the Research Corporation of the effort of Dr. Allaspt E. Corwin of the Johns Hopkins University to develop an effective and stable chemical compound for the treatment of lead poisoning will terminate with the close of the current year. He plans, however, to continue the work with other support and his further progress will be watched with the hope of his ultimate success. Judging from a report submitted under date of October 14, 1950, the accomplishment thus far has been in an improvement in the making of dithizone, a chemical useful in laboratory lead determinations, rather than in evolution of the sought-after antidote.

10. Toxicity of Lead Stabilizers At the behest of one of our members, the proposal that a study be made of the toxicity of lead stabilizers used in the manufacture of vinyl plastics has been discussed with two leading laboratories competent in work of this nature. Such a study would fall into two categories, the determination of toxicity by ingestion and that of effects on the skin, including both primary irritation and sensitization. The former would be by means of animal feeding or extraction tests and the latter by patch testing on human subjects. In view of the seemingly far greater importance of the question of effects on the skin, it is recommended that any such study be initially confined to that aspect of the problem.

Manfred Bowditch
Director of Health and Safety