

May 17, 1952

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Dr. R. M. Andre, Supervisor  
Medical Section  
The Industrial Commission of Ohio  
Columbus 15, Ohio

Dear Doctor Andre:

The reference of the record of [REDACTED], O.D. 72927, to me for an opinion poses a problem which is quite embarrassing and cannot be handled in a satisfactory manner in accordance with the usual procedure. Accordingly I am addressing this letter to you instead of making the customary specialist report, and I am not sending a fee bill since none is justified at this time.

There is nothing of factual consequence to review in the record, and there is nothing in it whatever, except the unsupported statement of Dr. Hopple, to indicate that this man suffered from lead poisoning. Perhaps the opinion is correct, since it is not impossible that this man was ill in May of 1951 as the result of undue absorption of lead. This is unlikely, however, even if he had complete freedom from any occupational exposure to lead from that time on until October 30, 1951, when Dr. Hopple obtained samples of blood and urine from this man and a group of fellow employees of Textileather Corporation. I say this because the concentration of lead in the blood and urine of this man on October 30, 1951 was not only within normal limits, but was in the low level of normal values, actually under the average value for persons with no unusual exposure to lead. It is rare, to the point of the greatest unlikelihood, that such low results should be obtained some six months after an episode of lead intoxication which followed upon a period of years of alleged significant occupational exposure to lead compounds. Moreover, the results obtained on fifteen other man in the group of the same plant, as I pointed out in my letter of interpretation to Dr. Hopple, were such as to demonstrate that none of them had suffered any recent significant exposure to lead compounds.

I have no information on the occupational or symptomatic history or on the clinical status of these men, although it is our practice to require such information in connection with such analyses, and such was requested. Therefore, I have no basis for interpreting the results, except to say that all except one (the blood of Dalton Miller) were within normal limits. Moreover, I remarked upon the negative character of the data in relation to the occupational exposure which was apparently under study, and suggested that there must have been some reason for the analyses and some background for the belief that the exposure had been hazardous. No information has been forthcoming. I do not like to be used in this manner, and I cannot avoid the feeling that

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there is something in this entire situation that does not meet the eye. In any case, this claim, as it has been presented, is utterly without support, and unless the Commission is prepared to grant compensation on the professional authority of a physician/unsupported statement, it would seem justified in demanding some evidence of the existence of significant occupational exposure to lead on the part of the claimant, before yielding to so great an uncertainty.

My curiosity has been piqued by these circumstances, particularly since it appears that compensation claims have been made by all of the men whose blood and urine were analysed in this Laboratory. One may be justified in the doubt that any of these men were the victims of lead poisoning. Certainly without some acceptable evidence from some source of significant occupational exposure to lead, no such belief is possible. I shall be greatly interested in any further developments in this case. It should be investigated particularly from the aspect of the detailed employment histories of the men whose analytical results are reported in this record. Were they ill or away from their regular employment for many months prior to these analyses? If not, that is, if they were engaged in work which allegedly involved occupational exposure to lead up to, or within some few weeks or months of, the time of the analyses, then the whole situation was a mistake of medical interpretation, since no hazardous absorption of lead occurred.

Cordially yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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