

LEAD INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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MANFRED BOWDITCH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Prof. Ronald K. Lane
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Manchester 13, England

January 11, 1955
Air Mail

Dear Lane:

I have read with considerable interest the clipping from the Chicago Tribune of which a copy is herewith and am hoping that, especially in view of the nearness of Rotherham and Sheffield to Manchester, you are conversant with the situation described and may be willing to contribute a bit more enlightenment.

Lead poisoning from the use of old storage battery casings as domestic fuel is an old story in this country, but partly because the hazard is so well recognized and partly due to the substitution of molded casings for the old-style wooden ones, it has become rather a rarity with us. I would be surprised if this etiological factor were really so "puzzling" on your side of the water.

My second and greater cause for astonishment is the statement that, prior to this episode "only six cases of lead poisoning among children have ever been recorded in Britain." With us, childhood lead poisoning is common enough to constitute perhaps my major "headache," this being in part due to the very poor prognosis in many such cases, and also to the fact that the only real remedy lies in educating a relatively ineducable category of parents. It is mainly a slum problem with us, estimated by some to run into tens of figures annually, and as we have no monopoly on either substandard housing or substandard mentalities in the USA, the quoted figure of six seems to me patently absurd.

My second enclosure is only one of many on this subject which I could send if it were of concern to you. It will at least serve to confirm what I have said above.

I hope that the new year has started auspiciously for you and will so continue.

Sincerely yours,

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