

December 10, 1931

Thomas A. Edison, Inc.,
Orange, N. J.

Attn: Mr. F. L. Larchar

Gentlemen:

I am answering your questionnaire in the form of a letter, since it is difficult to answer the questions with a word and have one's point of view understood.

- (1) I believe that the greater number of mild cases of lead poisoning are completely cured without leaving any damage as a basis of permanent disability. This conclusion is based on the careful experimental study of a considerable number of such cases taken from dusty lead trades.
- (2) Such cases require further study. In some instances, however, I believe that the only findings are entirely subjective. This is especially true when the symptoms are related to the central nervous system. In rare cases I believe that lead produces subjective effects without evidence of localizing organic lesions. This is difficult to prove, but it is impossible to disprove for the reason that lead which has been absorbed by nervous tissue is apparently permanently retained by such tissue.
- (3) Tremor is not sufficient specific evidence of lead intoxication, past or present.
- (4) I seriously doubt whether there are permanent disabilities, except those arising from the nervous system, such as paresis, paralysis, neuritis involving the peripheral nerves such as musculospiral, optic, etc. Other significant nervous system symptoms are fairly generalized diseases resembling Parkinson's disease, localized destructive lesions of the cerebral nuclei, general evidence of cerebral impairment varying from reduced intellectual capacity to insanity. On the basis of symptoms only I would not like to express myself. As to actual disability, however, I consider one of the least serious to be permanent muscular weakness with maintained atrophy. This may exist to almost any measurable degree. I question the significance of symptoms except as there is

some basis for concluding that organic damage has occurred. Even in vague central nervous system cases there is, I believe, some such evidence.

- (5) Fixed scales of award are in my opinion very faulty. However, in order to establish some basis for legal procedure I would suggest the advisability and feasibility of at least minimal awards for specific injuries. These will be unjust in some cases, but I believe they are necessary.
- (6) I have no objection to the use of my name in connection with these replies. Most of them will be found already in medical literature, together with a great deal more which I have had to say about lead poisoning.

I should say, however, that in my opinion the elimination of lead poisoning from industry is so much more profitable than the handling of cases of injury, and is so much easier, that this should be the chief basis of discussion among medical men. Even if the conditions which now produce cases of lead poisoning were completely eliminated, there would undoubtedly be claims from time to time. However, in my opinion, more individuals who have lead poisoning are under-compensated rather than over-compensated. It is my personal feeling that a man who has suffered from lead intoxication should be kept under observation and should be compensated in some measure for the length of time required to eliminate the excessive quantity of lead which he has absorbed.

Very truly yours,

RAK:ET

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