

November 20, 1934

Dr. R. R. Sayers
Bureau of Mines
Dept. of Commerce
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Sayers:

I have just finished going over our cases of complaints and I have extracted from those which have not been reported to you such information as would seem to be of use to you eliminating various types of correspondence which represent either expressions of opinion or extraneous matters. I am having all of this material copied and it will be sent along to you as soon as we can get it finished. I am afraid you will find much of it quite fragmentary and, from a certain point of view, unsatisfactory. I have followed the policy of carefully investigating only such cases as would seem to justify the effort. I have not wasted time on what seemed inconsequential. You perhaps realize that I have to fight for free time, and I do not waste any more than I can help. I trust you will not regard this as an apology for the fragmentary information. I do not regard it as such, but merely as a statement of point of view. I feel quite certain that you will agree with me that there is very little "soap" in the material at hand to justify detailed investigation. On the other hand, if there is any specific information which you wish, I shall be glad to try to obtain it for you, and moreover, if you feel that you would recommend somewhat more detailed information than is being given in some instances, I wish you would speak frankly.

All this, of course, is conditioned upon your reaction when you examine the material which I shall supply you some days later. For the present, I am sending you a summary of the cases as I have classified them so that you can see at a glance the general type of thing with which we have dealt. I have no doubt your experience coincides with the information which I am supplying you in this table, namely, that most of the cases are covered under the general heading of gasoline burns, recurrent dermatitis with in some instances sensitivity phenomena, and parasitic infestations of the skin following exposure to gasoline. I have lumped these under one heading as "Skin Lesions". One or two cases of furunculosis are also in this group. Neurological lesions include the three cases of peripheral nephritis which are already in your file, and all other neurological lesions

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pernicious anemia, and certain other localized central nervous system lesions. Under "General Illness" are listed a number of conditions which do not lend themselves readily to any other type of classification. Under "Gasoline Intoxication (Ingestion)" are listed all cases that have come to our attention in which patients have swallowed gasoline or have gotten it in their mouths from siphoning or otherwise. "Intoxication" is probably a badly chosen word. Under "Gasoline Intoxication (Inhalation)" are listed some cases of acute illness with one or two deaths directly due to the inhalation of gasoline vapors in high concentration.

Some time when you have time to drop me a note I should be interested in knowing something of the number of complaints which you have received. Some of them may well be duplicates of mine, but I imagine that most of them are not. It would be interesting to know whether or not they are, as a check on the adequacy of the reporting which we both receive. From the inconsequential type of some of the complaints, one might assume that the reporting of injuries has been very effective. On the other hand, my experience with such matters leads me to be skeptical. When one considers the fact which we have frequently observed, that complaints tend to come with frequency from a new area of distribution only to fall off very nearly to zero at a later date, one may be justified in doubting the effectiveness of the reporting of cases.

If you have any difficulties with this problem I hope you will not hesitate to let me know about them.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.