

Lead Industries Association

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7-12-13
July 11, 1956

Mr. Felix E. Wormser
Assistant Secretary
United States Department of
the Interior
Washington, D. C.

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for your letter of July 10th and the enclosure from "Parade," which I assume was from the edition used as a Sunday supplement by the Washington Post.

The story appeared last Sunday. The Chicago Sun-Times edition of "Parade" was handed to me at lunch on Monday by a friend who is in the advertising business. This morning came a copy from Dave Merson, from the St. Louis Post Dispatch edition. Later came a call from Carl Rose, who, quite independently, had also seen it in the St. Louis paper. Next came a copy, via Dave Borcina, from the Long Island Sunday Press edition. And now comes your contribution. As my advertising friend tells me that the circulation of "Parade" is now over seven million, there will doubtless be quite a few more.

Sure, I'm irritated, but more than that, I'm baffled. Aside from the kids that are poisoned (and we still don't know how many there are), it's a serious problem from the viewpoint of adverse publicity. The basic solution is to get rid of our slums, but even Uncle Sam can't seem to swing that one. Next in importance is to educate the parents, but most of the cases are in Negro and Puerto Rican families, and how does one tackle that job?

Where a published article or statement falsely describes an alleged lead hazard, I can come back at the author, and I do. But where, as in this case, the story is mainly factual and the author is a reputable physician, about all I can do is write him, expressing understanding of his educational purpose and calling attention to whatever I wish he had said otherwise, and that I have already done in the present instance.

With the public health officials, local, state and national, I been at some pains to cultivate their good will and get them into a receptive frame of mind



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Mr. Felix E. Wormser

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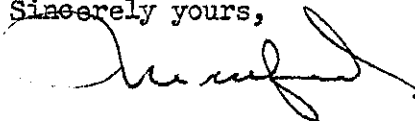
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as to our viewpoint. I feel that this has paid off, as, for example, in Chicago, where we have been able to stave off a paint labeling regulation like that here in New York. The exchange with Jerome Trichter of which copies are herewith is a case in point.

Our greatest need now is, I believe, a more comprehensive understanding of the whole problem on the part of the "top brass" of our organization, and to that end I hope to talk it over with Drew Fletcher early next week, when a few more copies of "Parade" have come in. Such questions as whether total lead paint sales warrant spending more money and effort than are now being sunk in the job are not for me to decide.

I have burdened you with a long reply to a short note, my excuse being that I am so anxious that all who have our interests at heart should understand what we are up against. Please forgive it, and please keep right on sending me anything that you think should have my attention.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Drew Fletcher', written in a cursive style.

MB:GW

Enclosures