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March 11, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL McINTIRE:

Subject: Notes for consideration when you call on Assistant Secretary Bard.

1. He asks specifically what the policy is concerning invitation of such people as Mr. Zimmer of the Bureau of Labor Standards, Labor Department into the Navy Yards to make a survey of the welding and other hazards. I told him that we had never done that sort of work and recommended against it, as I know who Mr. Zimmer intends to send in if it should be done.

2. My meeting with Mr. Bard was specifically due to the fact that Captain Fisher had written a letter to Dr. Selby inviting him to make a survey of Navy Yards, with particular reference to health hazards, and make recommendations to the Shore Establishments Division.

I gave Mr. Bard and the two officers present a complete story of the beginning of this controversy from the Federal Administrator's letter; that is, that the United States Public Health Service had four teams of traveling scientists alleged to be able to make surveys of all of the Navy Yards and make recommendations for the correction of such hazards as were discovered. I told Mr. Bard that this was not considered the best policy, due to the fact that we had medical officers in the Yards and that in practically all instances recommendations of sound character had been made by medical officers. We saw no need of inviting the United States Public Health Service on its own invitation to do this job.

3. Likewise, I told him that I had spoken to you and that you had indicated that President Roosevelt thought that this might not be the best policy, due to the fact that they might cause disturbance in the labor element.

4. Points of great interest:

(a) Such health hazards as silicosis in our foundries. None of our foundries would pass the necessary inspection to obtain workmen's compensation insurance from any of the insurance organizations. I doubt if any of our foundries would be tolerated if the State industrial health people were to make surveys of them. Repeated recommendations have been made by the medical officers attached to these Yards that studies be made on dust concentrations and steps be taken to remedy this condition.

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(b) Sand blasting. Several recommendations have been made with reference to sand blasting and the danger from this hazard with particular reference to the production of silicosis. Since these recommendations have come in, we now are using steel shot rather than sand in sand blasting, but this is still a hazardous trade and might be restudied.

(c) Welding. Welding is a hazard under certain circumstances: that is, if nitrous fumes are encountered and these can be completely obviated by reasonable exhaust ventilation. However, several people here complained that we are doing welding under dangerous conditions. I frankly admitted that we had no data on which to make a considered opinion, but we would immediately start out with a view of determining the concentration of fumes of toxic metals or substances that might be in the welding rod.

(d) Solvents. Too little is known on the question of solvents and since there is a controversy between the toxicologists and industrial hygienists on this point, it will be necessary to do a very careful survey to determine whether we are in trouble.

(e) Hydrogenated hydrocarbons. This is a matter of considerable concern in industry and we may be getting damage from some of these, but no surveys have been made to tell us the concentration of these compounds.

(f) Eye flashes from unprotected electric arcs, such as welding and pouring. This can be completely obviated by using screens for the workmen.

(g) Cadmium dust, smoke and fumes. If we are doing as much cadmium welding as is indicated by unofficial information from the field, we may be in a position to be seriously criticized about this. This also needs research to determine the concentration.

(h) Chromium trioxide. Chromium plating is one of the dangerous occupations in that people frequently have perforated septum from irritation from chromium trioxide. Such plants as I have seen doing plating in the Navy appear to be fairly well ventilated, but there is evidence that a considerable number of people have been damaged from this hazard.

(i) Asbestosis. We are having a considerable amount of work done in asbestos and from my observations I am certain that we are not protecting the men as we should. This is a matter of official report from several of our Navy Yards.

5. We are not doing a very bad job of safety as we have men safety boards, but there will be a tremendous increase in the number of non-

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fatal accidents, some of which will be lost time and some of which will be non-lost time, with the increase in personnel. This is already apparent from the reports from the Yards. If this is not enough to hold them down, I will give you all the additional information you need.

C. S. Stephenson,
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