

MIAMI, FLORIDA
PAN-AMERICAN AIRWAYS

7/17



Reorder No. 912 1/8

PARK BRAND FOLDER
MEDIUM HEAVY WEIGHT

REF 0021177

April 15, 1941

Mr. Harry Kaley
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation
Chrysler Building
New York City
New York

Dear Mr. Kaley:

No doubt you are aware of the situation presented by the formation of large quantities of lead deposits in gasoline supplied to Pan American Airways by the Texas Company. The details of the matter are presented in letters from Mr. Rosser and from Mr. Lewis, dated March 27th and April 3rd respectively. I have in addition a brief memorandum supplied by Dr. Kitzmiller and giving the facts as to the medical situation in much the same fashion as they are outlined in Mr. Rosser's letter to Mr. Lewis.

We do not anticipate any special difficulties among the personnel employed in the repair of drums in Miami, but we will keep in touch with this matter and do whatever may be required. It seems, however, that the safety problem has not necessarily been disposed of completely, and I feel that there are certain matters which might well be attended to for the prevention of any further difficulties. Accordingly I thought it best to address you on the subject.

First there is the problem at Port Arthur where the gasoline was produced, and where shipping records will presumably be available to show where the gasoline has gone. I believe a thorough-going investigation should be made at Port Arthur, and that all information which can be obtained should be so obtained. We should do our best to assist Pan American in the tracing of this gasoline, to eliminate it from the field and to see that the drums which have been used be returned to Pan American as promptly as it is feasible. There will also be the problem of cleaning these drums at Port Arthur, and we should satisfy ourselves that the means employed for this purpose are safe.

KE 0021178

It appears that there may not be much in the way of cleaning of tanks in South America, and with the abandonment of the tank at Antilla in Cuba, it seems that this tank will not have to be cleaned. On the other hand I think we should check carefully into this whole question of the location of any tanks which may have to be cleaned so as to give every possible assistance, and so as not to let this matter die until it is cleared up. I should also consider it desirable for Roberts in South America to know as much about this whole matter as is possible. Therefore any information which can be obtained as to the location and cleaning of any tanks on the eastern coast of South America, or elsewhere in South America, could be reported to me and forwarded by me to Roberts with a recital of the whole story. Pan American is a very good organization in South America and they could undoubtedly handle the matter with very little assistance from us. On the other hand certain things have a way of happening in South America, and it would be most unfortunate if there were any difficulties over this problem which could be avoided through the supervisory efforts of Roberts. Mr. Rosser has done a very good job in keeping in touch with this problem, and his contacts with Pan American officials in Miami have been very satisfactory. It might be desirable for him to continue his efforts and to keep in close touch with everything that happens, and to find out everything that can be learned. However I leave that matter in your hands but with the feeling that no stone should be left unturned, since the handling of these deposits is an obviously dangerous matter.

Incidentally our analysis of a chamols used for the filtration of gasoline at Antilla showed the presence of 0.61 grams of deposits. These deposits contained 6.7 per cent of organic lead. A sample of gasoline containing deposits was filtered, yielding 5.38 grams of deposit which gave up .95 per cent of organic lead on steam distillation.

From such information as we can obtain, it seems quite certain that these deposits were not the result of the presence of lecithin, and it is also reasonably certain that they did not result from the presence of alkylate in the gasoline. Therefore it seems that some unusual inhibitor was used which resulted in this precipitation of lead. This may be a dark secret to be carefully guarded by the Texas Company but, on the other hand, it seems to me a very important matter and, therefore, I would suggest the advisability of some discussion of this matter with the executives in New York with the idea of establishing the facts, if possible, chiefly for the purpose of preventing further difficulties of this same character.

KE 0021179

If this type of thing were to happen in any extensive way, it would be a very serious matter indeed, and it is hard to know just what we could do about it. Accordingly I doubt if this should be regarded as an isolated instance, and I certainly think we should attempt to learn the truth of the matter through every possible avenue.

I will keep you in touch with any further developments at this end, and if there is anything further which I can do, do not hesitate to call upon me. I shall await further information, however, before transmitting this story to Lester Roberts.

Very truly yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

KE 0021180