

December 1, 1956

Mr. Hymin Shapiro
Ethyl Corporation
1600 West Eight Mile Road
Ferndale 20, Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Shapiro:

Thanks for sending me the communication of Mr. Glesson concerning Dr. T. H. Coffield's report of information obtained at the ACS meeting at Atlantic City. This clarifies a report which came to me from Dr. Ritzmiller that some disquieting information had been supplied to some of the personnel at Orangeburg concerning the dire effects of exposure to inorganic manganese compounds. It brings me to comment on the procedure whereby such information gains currency within the Corporation to the disadvantage of our efforts to deal effectively and realistically with matters of industrial hygiene.

I do not criticize the gathering of information by any of the personnel of the Corporation. I must urge, however, that there is a proper means of dealing with such information. In this case the latter was not observed. I suggest, hereafter, and as a matter of proper procedure, that such information be passed on to a representative of the Medical Department, before it is acted on within the Corporation in any manner that relates to industrial health.

As to the information, itself, nothing is erroneous, except that no quantitative relationships are referred to, with respect to the severity or duration of the exposure which is capable of inducing manganese intoxication. These are matters on which we are fairly well informed, and indeed we are familiar with the Cuban situation and are well acquainted with Dr. Penalver and his associates from whom this information came. There are other somewhat similar situations in some of the foreign mining and refining operations with which we are familiar, and we know in some detail about the therapeutic investigations which are in progress.

In order to put to rest some of the apprehension concerning the hazards of handling inorganic manganese compounds, without minimizing the need for appropriate measures of hygiene~~and~~ control, I should like to stress the fact that prolonged and severe exposure is necessary to induce disease.

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The conditions in the Cuban industries concerned are very bad indeed, and would not be tolerated by responsible industrial organizations.

What we are more concerned about, without any neglect of the potential problem of a manganese salt in the Orangeburg operations, is the potential opportunity afforded for exposure to an organic manganese compound which is more readily absorbed and finds relative ease of access to vulnerable tissues and organs in the body.

I should appreciate it greatly if this incident were to supply the basis for a general recognition of the responsibilities of the Medical Department in the interpretation of toxicological information with the Corporation and for this reason I am giving this letter a fairly wide circulation.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK of

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F. J. Schroeter
C. J. Sprunk
R. D. Clouson
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Roy C. A. Beck
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