

August 18, 1954

Mr. M. L. Ernsberger
E. I. duPont de Nemours and Company
Organic Chemicals Department
Wilmington 98, Delaware

Dear Mr. Ernsberger:

As I indicated I am writing to bring you up to date on the development of the experimental work in the laboratory on the inhalation of lead, and on certain aspects of the contamination of the atmosphere of cities (especially) with the exhausts of automobiles, with particular reference to lead.

In a discussion of the tempo of the inhalation experiments with representatives of Ethyl Corporation, the conclusion was arrived at that these experiments should be expedited within certain reasonable limits, and I was authorized to proceed to that end. Accordingly, we have made plans to duplicate the respiratory chamber in the room in which the first one is installed and work is under way for that purpose. Some remodeling of the room was required. The result will be that we can carry on the work with two subjects at once. In addition, a smaller chamber is being provided in another part of the building (on the same floor) for doing the preparatory work required to provide reliable experimental conditions for further investigation. In certain respects this will be a more economical way to work, but of course the cost will be greater per year.

I realize that you have accepted no responsibility for the increased rate of expenditure involved in the additional work projected, and it is not my intention to involve your Company in this situation to any extent that goes beyond your wishes. On the other hand you should be aware of the situation, and both of us need to face the fact that there will be no automatic means of allocating the expense of the work being done hereafter. The expense of revamping and adding to the equipment has now begun, and it will appear in the account for the third quarter of the year. Therefore, I shall need to do something about it before long. As a way out of the difficulty, I suggest that it might be satisfactory for you and your associates to decide and to instruct me on the maximum sum (regardless of the total cost of the job) which you are prepared to appropriate for this job this year. You can reconsider the matter from year to year, on the basis of what is being accomplished and what you consider to be its relative importance to you. You will

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continue to receive the account of the expenditures being made and can see just where you fit into the picture. If this is not satisfactory to you, you can advise me as to an alternative procedure.

Another matter in which you are concerned relates to the investigation of the lead in the atmosphere of cities, and particularly in that of Los Angeles. We have been studying this problem in a general way for some time, as you know, and we have expended appreciable sums of our sponsors money on it. It is, I believe, a very necessary part of the information which the tetraethyl lead industry requires for its reasonable security. It is a double-barreled problem, involving the lead in the air and the extent of the absorption of this lead by people. We have to investigate the air on the one hand, and the quantitative evidences of the absorption of lead on the part of the most exposed segment of the population, on the other. This problem, also, is the other side of the coin, the side of which is the laboratory investigation with which you are familiar. The extent of your participation in this investigation is for you to decide. You have indicated previously that your Company did not wish to participate in it, but I am not sure that I should accept that as a final or permanent answer, especially since I consider that it is not, necessarily, a wise decision. I speak of the wisdom of the decision only in the sense, that I suspect that if no such work were done, you (and I too) would have important cause to regret that it had not been. In any case, no harm can come from my recalling the matter to your attention with the perspective that may be indicated by the recent demand for such information in Los Angeles. If we had had no information we should be on the spot. Since we have some satisfactory data we can answer some of the questions and avoid being pushed into unproductive work. A further case in point is that of the misinformation which appeared in TIME lately. Since we knew that what was said was nonsense, we could afford to take a philosophical attitude toward it. Otherwise we might have been jockeyed into an embarrassing position. We are not under any immediate pressure except in Los Angeles, and I shall relate what we are doing there presently. However, we should proceed in our own way and time to obtain convincing information on this matter, and I suspect that your people will wish to provide some modest support for these observations and spread it out over some period of time.

In Los Angeles we had anticipated doing some work independently. As it happened the Southern California Air Pollution Foundation approached us with the suggestion that we carry out an investigation under their sponsorship. We agreed to do so finally after exploring the situation with them on the basis of our studying the particulate material generally and not lead exclusively. This is being done in what I believe will turn out to be a satisfactory manner, and without putting undue emphasis on the atmospheric content of lead. The Foundation is paying for the job, except for the fact that we have obtained some local assistance, for our own convenience, from technical people in Ethyl's San Bernardino Laboratory. We should find it most troublesome to do all of the fetching, carrying and manipulating, and it seems fitting and to

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us most helpful to have this help from people whom I have known for a long time and with whom I find it pleasant to work.

This covers the situation to date. The experimental work is progressing well and I hope to be able to see the end of the present exposure of the subject in the chamber at an early date, i.e. shortly after the subsidence of the summer heat. We must emerge from this seasonal situation before we can know just where we are.

I had expected to be away during September. As things may appear, I shall be on the job from now on, having had a brief vacation along a trout stream in Idaho. I shall be prepared to discuss any of these matters with you, therefore, at practically any time, if you so desire.

Cordially yours,

RAK:vr

Robert A. Menoo, M.D.

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