

April 25, 1960

air mail

J. S. Felton, M. D.
Professor of Occupational Health
University of California Medical Center
School of Medicine
Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health
Division of Occupational Health
Los Angeles 24, California

Dear Jean:

Our bibliographic staff has been gathering the references and, in so far as it has seemed useful, has been abstracting the articles on various aspects of the lead problem, for many years, as a part of our systematic investigation of this broad problem. Further it has been in my mind for a long time to put together two monographs, one on the many ramifications of the tetraethyl lead industry, and another on the more general problem of lead in nature, in industry and in the community. Only recently have I reached the point of doing more than gathering the data, and as you know, in all probability, much of our work has been published only partially. As my release from certain other duties has come nearer I have looked forward to the accomplishment of these related purposes. The bibliography is, of course, a part of my program.

Meanwhile, no part of this bibliography has been published. If I had had any appreciable amount of time for writing more than circumstances required (or seemed to require) I would have published more of the experimental work in collaboration with Irene Campbell of our staff, who, with Nell Conway, who preceded her here, has done the bibliographic work.

A great deal of time would be required merely to comb over the bibliography to extract what you might wish to include along the lines of your intended effort. The collection does exist, however, and is accessible, and if you were to decide to visit us and have a look at it you will certainly be welcome.

With respect to your having a sample of tetraethyl lead, I think something can be done to satisfy you. I shall advise the technical people of Ethyl Corporation concerning your wishes and ask them to consider how this can best be done for you. This sort of thing has never been done before, and so far as Ethyl Corporation is concerned it would never have been done except on my recommendation (up to December 1958 when I retired from the Medical Directorship). It could be authorized by the present Medical Director (it probably would not), but we have never distributed any of this compound to anyone excepting as he had a valid experimental purpose in seeking for it. The early experience of the Corporation made

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it necessary that stringent control be exercised, and all unusual situations have been referred to me for approval. Even at this time, I shall have to insist upon the use of a very small, sealed, and essentially unbreakable container, for this material simply cannot, so far as the responsibilities of Ethyl Corporation go, be permitted to go anywhere into any hands from which it might be released to irresponsible custody, or be subjected to accidental escape. As you are aware, in connection with radioactive materials, unless there is a complete and relentless control, every exception is a threat to the regimen. This sounds a bit severe to many people, who say rightly, "much more dangerous materials than this are easily acquired." To this I reply, "true, but these other things do break out from time to time and injure or kill people." I have been determined that the illnesses and loss of life in the handling of tetraethyl lead would cease after the early experiences, and this has very nearly been accomplished. However, I will see what I can do. You will be asked to sign a release and to take certain precautions.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK:ss

Dictated but not read

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