Dr. Florent Coste
Paris, France

KE 0013345

Docteur Florent Coste
Médecin des Hôpitaux
41 Rue Cardinet XVIIe

Paris, January 31st, 1937

Dr. R.A. Kehoe
University of Cincinnati
College of Medicine
Cincinnati, Ohio. U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Kehoe,

I am pointing out the following matter to you, about which it would be important that you give me your opinion :

In two plants at Port St.Louis du Rhône, when making out the "contrats collectifs" the workers Unions asked that the following clause be included :

"Certificates will be provided to the men examined by "Dr. Coste to show that they are fit, medically, for "carrying out the blends".

When I last visited the Port St.Louis Plants, the management of the factories and the workmen themselves insisted on my providing them such certificates. I refused, saying that I could take no decision in this connection before having consulted the management of Ethyl Export Corporation.

It is evident that we have no reason to provide medical certificates to the workmen of concerns where Ethyl Fluid is handled , and it is unadmissible that the Direction of these concerns have accepted to include in the "contrats collectifs" an obligation concerning the medical consultant of Ethyl Export Corporation, who is absolutely outside of this concern.

However, we must realize that, in the actual state of social claims in France, our refusal to supply the workmen with the certificates asked for could cause the companies concerned serious difficulties, such as impossibility of finding personnel for carrying out the blends, and even threats of strikes. Should such facts occur, they would soon be known from the other workers Unions and in other refineries or blending plants, and this could bring about serious difficulties for the commercial activities of Ethyl Export Corporation in France.

I would point out to you , in this connection, that the law on occupational diseases in France covers the risk of saturnism for the industries which are mentioned on the official list as causing exposure to saturnism. The handling of Ethyl Fluid is not mentioned on that list for the time being , so that a workman who would suffer from saturnism

after carrying out Ethyl Fluid blends would not be allowed any indemnity.

It is probably on account of that situation that the workers Unions want to provide their members with such documents as medical certificates, stating that they were in good health condition when they started doing blends.

I do not know if, even with these certificates, they could be indemnified in case they would suffer from saturnism. In any way, it would be normal that certificates be delivered by the medical department of the companies with whom these men work, and not by the Medical Department of Ethyl Export Corporation.

In agreement with M. Thenault, we will therefore ask the two companies at Port St.Louis du Rhône to entrust their own Medical Department with the making out of these certificates, pointing out, however, that I would be ready to provide these medical departments with any data regarding the men I have examined. I do not know whether such an answer will satisfy these companies. I will let you know about it in due course.

It would be most important for me to have as soon as possible your views regarding this problem. For the time being it is a question of little importance because it has been raised by two plants at Port St.Louis du Rhône only, but it could become far more important if other companies put in the same claim for their respective workmen, and we should be fully advised as to your way of judging matters.

Mr. Bevan and Mr. Thenault agree with me that it would be preferable that I do not give directly any certificates. Mr. Thenault is writing to the Companies concerned that they had no right to include such clauses in the contract without permission of Ethyl Export Corporation.

I hear that you will be coming over to France some time this year, and I would very much like to know when you expect to arrive, so that I can arrange, if possible, to be in Paris at that time and meet you then.

Looking forward to seeing you again,

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

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