

June 7, 1950

Dr. J. G. Townsend, Medical Director,
Chief, Industrial Hygiene Division,
U. S. Public Health Service,
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Doctor Townsend:

You will remember that when you were here last, I talked with you briefly about the proposal of the Thompson Vitameter Corporation to introduce their Vitameter and their Vitane into some use in Puerto Rico. I discussed this situation at some length with their representative, and the situation is such that I did not feel warranted in advising them not to carry out this proposal. However, I did say that I would discuss the matter with you and would transmit to them any recommendations which you might have to make in the matter.

The situation as I see it is something like this. Puerto Rico presents the opportunity of using this equipment and material to improve the fuel to a very considerable degree. This also offers the Thompson people an opportunity to try out their product under somewhat different conditions than those which prevail in the United States. Considering the number of automobiles and the facilities for fueling, it does not appear to me that there can be any appreciable hazard in the use of the material, in view of the essentially negative results we have obtained both experimentally and in the observation of people engaged in these activities in Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati. An arrangement has been made with Du Pont to supply the tetraethyl fluid and to see that it is properly mixed with the other ingredients of the Vitane at a more or less standard mixing plant of the type used for mixing tetraethyl lead with gasoline. Du Pont has agreed to send a representative from time to time to look after the mixing, and I presume this will involve their sending a physician from time to time to carry out physical examinations on the mixing personnel. It is my intention to talk with Doctor Rankin and to arrange with him a means whereby certain observations can be made on individuals engaged in handling the Vitane and in installing the Vitameters and servicing them. By this means we can carry on observations on potentially exposed personnel in substantially the same manner as we have done in the United States, and I believe that any possible evidence of risk would demonstrate itself in and about us here before any trouble would be anticipated in Puerto Rico. On the whole, therefore, I have not felt that any undue concern over this matter was warranted, and I have come to the conclusion that unless there were some official objection, for reasons which did not appear on the surface, the introduction of the product into Puerto Rico might be made in this somewhat tentative, and certainly not very concentrated, manner.

Dr. J. G. Townsend - (2) - June 7, 1950

I should appreciate it very much indeed if you would give me your reaction to this situation, in such a way that I can transmit it either formally or informally, as you may wish, to Thompson Vitameter Corporation. If you should feel that you do not wish to express any opinion of approval or disapproval, but rather that of keeping a watching brief on the situation, I shall so inform these people. In any case, I shall be guided entirely in what I say to them or write to them, by your wishes. If you wish to leave it in my hands, subject to reporting to you from time to time, that will be entirely satisfactory.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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