

March 25, 1954

CONFIDENTIAL

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

Dear Mr. Ernsberger:

I shall be glad to have you and Doctor Rankin visit us at your early convenience in order to discuss the program of experimentation which we are conducting. My reply to your letter of March 12th, in establishing a specific date, has been delayed because of a somewhat hasty trip to the West Coast, which I was compelled to take. This would make the first date (April 1st), which you suggested, a bit too close for comfort, and as it happens I have an all-day meeting of another group on that day. April 6th would be a satisfactory date, however, as would the 15th, and if it meets your convenience the earlier date would be the most satisfactory.

It seems advisable to acquaint you in advance with a matter which I wish to bring to your attention at the time of our meeting, since you may wish to consult some of your associates about it in advance, or alternatively, you may wish me to discuss it with others of your group. I have been very cautious in my discussion of this matter, and I should not wish to attract any attention to it more than may be necessary. The fact is, however, that I am more than a little anxious about the development in the Los Angeles area, and I believe that we are in danger of being presented with some questions which cannot be answered satisfactorily (i.e. in a manner to satisfy some of the people in Los Angeles). In the course of my last trip I looked into some of these matters in a very discreet manner, and I think there can be no doubt that we must make some detailed observations as to the lead in the atmosphere, and the evidences of lead absorption on the part of some well-selected groups of exposed persons. It seems likely that some of your people are aware of this situation, as it may effect the use of tetraethyl lead, but I am convinced that we need to handle the situation with considerable care. I wish therefore to confer with the appropriate people in your organization, and to make certain recommendations for action. Among these, I believe, we should accelerate the work we are doing in the Laboratory, and we have developed some plans toward that end. This, I believe, will not add materially to the eventual cost of what we have proposed to do, and indeed it may even lower the total cost, although that is not certain. However, it will accelerate the rate of expenditure considerably and get the job done sooner. It is particularly pertinent to the situation that we would be enabled to examine the effects of the

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exposure of an individual (or individuals) to the lead compounds that escape from the exhaust system of an automobile, and find their way into the breathing zone of persons. This will not be easy, but in some respects it is the major problem at issue, and we need to attack it as soon as possible. I considered it necessary for technical reasons, and wise for experimental reasons, to study a very finely divided material first. It is now in order to study a material of larger particle size, and it will be necessary, eventually, to study a mixture of sizes for reasons which I won't go into here in detail, except to point out that this is the problem to be met in relation to the lead in exhaust gas.

As it happens, I shall be in Wilmington for the dedication of the Haskell Laboratory on the 29th. That, I dare say, will not be the proper time to go into any of these matters, but I shall be there overnight, and if you or any of your associates feel that some preliminary discussion of this matter is in order, I could manage to make some time available for the purpose. I have to go to Baltimore on the following day, and therefore there will not be time for it, unless it seems desirable that I return in the afternoon to Wilmington for that purpose. I leave that to your wishes. You can leave word for me at the Hotel if you wish to get in touch with me while I am there. I shall be arriving there Monday morning and will be there on the evening of the 29th.

Cordially yours,

RAK:vr

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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