

Dr. Willard F. Machle

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Dr. Willard Machle
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Dear Bill:

Thanks very much for your several letters, to which I will reply all at once.

I was very glad to have your testimony before the Delaney Committee. It represented another expression of a point of view which is not too divergent from that of several others. I am not sure that any of us will be listened to with respect as to the mechanism by which the activities and knowledge and facilities of the Food and Drug Administration may be augmented. However, we have said and done what we could in the matter.

Thanks also for the further information on the Miller case. This situation would have been rather disastrous some years ago but from the point of view of establishing a precedent, it is no longer important. It is quite unfortunate that the Board has reversed the decision of the Referee, but I shall not spend much time weeping over it.

With reference to Doctor Harris, we might well be interested in him under other circumstances. At present, however, there is no opening in the staff, and I do not see any way at this moment in which we could use his services, within our present program of investigation and our budgetary situation. This situation might be changed on short notice, but it is a little unlikely, since actually we are overstaffed, not so much from the point of view of work that we could undertake, but from the point of view of the proper utilization of our facilities. The Laboratory is filled with people, and I do not see how we could take on any very large addition to our work program.

(In March)

With reference to the visit from Mr. J. W. Guehring through Harry Helman, I should tell you that I have already interviewed this man and have given him a certain amount of information. It is my understanding that he is to return at an appropriate time from the point of view of what he and his associates are able to develop, to discuss the matter with me further. I have taken the position that the information which we have, as a laboratory group, is to be made available to other persons who engage in manufacturing so long as we have the means of dealing with a sound and bona fide group. I suggested to Mr. Guehring, therefore, that it would be necessary for him to submit to me evidence of the bona fide

they might choose to give me with respect to how far to go. The situation is, substantially, that I am to exercise my own judgment, but, at the same time, to recognize that the assets of Ethyl Corporation, with respect to know-how and the like, are to be reasonably protected. The position that is taken is that this industry cannot but suffer throughout from an incompetent effort of this sort, and that, therefore, every reasonable effort may be made to keep them out of trouble. As you will recognize, better than anyone else, I have certain professional responsibilities, particularly in relation to the United Public Health Service, which I should be unwilling to neglect. At present, all of the regulation of the industry comes from the industry itself, and therefore so long as appropriate steps are taken by all of the representatives of the industry, the situation can remain in that manner. It will be obvious to you, also, that the Public Health Service is not properly equipped, at this time, to take care of its responsibilities in this matter. Therefore, those of us who understand the problem will have to carry the ball as well as we can. For this reason I am prepared to do everything that I can do to give proper advice to this group.

This is one of the situations in which you could be of considerable help if you were to choose to do so. This is particularly true since there is another matter on the West Coast which might interest you, at least as a part-time or temporary job. I have been approached by the people on the West Coast to give them advice and help in connection with the establishment of a laboratory group to study the Los Angeles smog and air pollution problem under the authority of a commission which has been established by Los Angeles County. It is necessary that this group appoint a director for this job by the first of July. The matter became acute, so far as I am concerned, on Saturday, when Pottenger, whom you will remember, called me and asked me to make some specific recommendation to them as to what they might do and how they might do it. A rather formidable commission has been formed to sponsor this activity, and \$25,000.00 is available at present to pay for a director, and presumably his secretary, to get the matter started. It seems likely that you already know something about this, and it also seems rather unlikely that you will be very keenly interested in it. On the other hand, they are in great need of someone to tell them what to do and how to do it. The situation is of such a sort that it can only be handled by a person having a name and also sufficient strength of character to say what he wants and to do what should be done. I have told them what I consider to be the difficulties of their position, and these are quite great. On the other hand, I believe

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real contribution can be made to the general problem. I shall not go into details at present, but Pottenger has agreed to meet me on the Sunday after the Ramazzini Conclave in Atlantic City, to discuss the situation. I have combed my skull for somebody who could do this job, and frankly I doubt if there is anyone in the country who could do it as well as yourself, if you were even measurably interested.

What I am driving at is that you might undertake to handle this job for a time and at the same time give such advice and help as might be required by this new tetraethyl lead manufacturing group. If you would even consider seriously this problem, enough to take a trip to Los Angeles and to discuss it with the appropriate people, I should be glad to urge them in this direction. I seem to have some vague recollection that you have already been approached on this problem by one group or another. However, I am not sure of that point. In fact, I am not sure of anything with respect to this Los Angeles situation other than that somebody with some vision and force should undertake to do a job there, if anything actually is to be done. If you are at all interested in this, please let me know. If you are not interested yourself, perhaps you might suggest somebody who is. One thing that will be necessary, I am sure, is to exercise a considerable amount of caution with reference to what happens to the individual. It would not be wise to send anyone out there on that job whose heart would be easily broken. Whoever undertakes it will have to be perfectly willing to throw the job up and leave if he cannot have a free hand in going about it. Moreover, I think you will recognize, as I do, that the whole thing may blow up on political or other grounds. The financial aspect of the problem could be dealt effectively out there if it were handled properly. Indeed I think there is very considerable likelihood that enough funds could be made available to attack the problem from several angles. In order to ascertain whether or not this may be the case, it will obviously be necessary for someone to go there, to consult with the right people and to find out what the situation actually is. It will be particularly important to find out who may be the power behind the movement. Certainly Pottenger, who is actively moving in the matter at present, is not such a person.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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