

October 23, 1968

George F. Kirby, Ph.D., President
Ethyl Corporation
P.O. Box 1466
Baton Rouge, La. 70821

Dear George:

It has occurred to me that you would be keenly interested in knowing the status of the investigation concerned with a tolerable level of lead in the general atmosphere, especially at this time when the goal of the work is near at hand. I shall have to sit down with all of the data obtained during the past several years during which this has been the point of attack, and see what I can come up with. This can be done while the observations on our present experimental subject (who is out of phase with the schedule through no fault of his own) are being completed. There is little doubt in my mind that his behavior will follow closely the pattern of the performance shown in the present report.

This obviously sketchy report was prepared at the request of Dr. Plancey who had to report to a committee of A.P.I. and the results had to be picked up just where they were. The latter are quite sufficient, however, to reveal the important outcome of the experiment. I have sent copies of the report, incomplete as it is to a number of the persons most concerned in Ethyl Corporation, duPont and Lead Industries Association.

I shall be going to Holland, by way of London, at the end of November, to participate (by invitation) in a Symposium in Amsterdam with a number of outstanding European men in the field of Occupational Health, in which standards and practices in the lead-using trades will be the subject. A report is to be prepared for presentation to the International Association for Occupational Health at the Sixteenth Congress in Tokyo in September of 1969. I have no doubt that there will be discussion of the standard for the general atmosphere. I've been asked to discuss the papers being presented (which have been sent to me) in some detail and to prepare a record (later) of my comments. It is an opportunity that I would not wish to miss.

While in London, I shall meet with Eevan and others, and Dr. Barry has asked me to visit the plants in Cheshire to follow-up a bit on my last visit. I am pleased, of course, to do this.

I would not like to anticipate the outcome of a critical and statistical examination of the information obtained from these experiments by predicting what the "tolerable level" - that is the precise number that emerges from the data alone - will be, but I think there will be a basis in theory that will emerge, and that this can be tailored further, to some degree, by physiological considerations. As you may know, I've been exceedingly reluctant to offer guesses, as a substitute for reasonably firm experimental evidence, on this highly important matter. If a number for lead comes logically out of the experimental data, it will be the first example of such an event.

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In view of the concluding salutation of your last letter, I am happy to tell you that I had a thoroughly delightful vacation in which not the least important factor was marvelous fishing and riding beautiful trails on horseback. The best fishing, of course, was the farthest away on the trails.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wp

enclosure

P.S. I have not forgotten the sequel to my original report to you. I hope to get at it shortly.

RAK

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