

Dr. T. B. Dunn
Shanghai, China

KE 0013411

February 24, 1937

Dr. T. B. Dunn
Robert Dollar Building
51 Canton Road
Shanghai

Dear Doctor Dunn:

Some little time ago I received a letter from Mr. F. M. S. Tegner, representative of the Ethyl Export Corporation, indicating that he had discussed with you the question of the medical care of the mixing personnel employed in certain plants in which Ethyl Fluid is being mixed with gasoline in the environs of Shanghai. I have no doubt Mr. Tegner discussed with you most of the important aspects of this question but as the Chief Medical Consultant of the Ethyl Export Corporation it seems advisable to transmit to you such information as will acquaint you with the general medical policies of the Corporation, as well as such scientific information as will acquaint you with the studies of the problems of industrial hygiene which arise in connection with this business.

First I should like to point out that our primary purpose has been to prevent industrial exposure to lead compounds which would produce cases of lead poisoning. It was our original feeling when this business developed in the United States the manner of mixing, the type of equipment and the hygienic regulations would have to be prepared and enforced by the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation if it were to continue in business without thereby producing a series of cases of poisoning among men in this work. The early experimental work in this laboratory indicated the character of the hazards of the mixing operations and of all other operations associated with the industry. It became apparent that the compound tetraethyl lead was an exceedingly treacherous lead compound and that it would be necessary to rigidly regulate the handling of the material. From time to time, therefore, we have issued instructions based on the continued observations of industrial conditions. We have improved the equipment through the engineering facilities of the Corporation in such a way as to make the industry safe. Our experience in this country has demonstrated that the material can be handled safely if the equipment is properly built and operated, and if the regulations are adequately enforced. Because the work of mixing is simple and because it can be carried out for years without difficulties, I have

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been convinced that the precautionary measures could not be maintained in force except through the supervision of competent physicians who, understanding the difficulties, would continue to insist upon rigid enforcement of the regulations. Therefore I have wished to obtain medical supervision of each one of the mixing plants, and I have attempted to obtain the services of men of competence who could be counted upon to examine the men carefully and who could also be counted upon to exert pressure, if need be, upon the management at the plants. We have met surprisingly few obstacles and for the most part plant managers have been entirely cooperative. This, I believe, is largely due to the fact that our medical consultants have been respected and have continued to do competent and careful work while maintaining a position relatively independent of the industry involved. Obviously it has been impossible for me to see, interview and select all of the men who are engaged in this work. However I have seen a considerable number of them and I have kept in contact through correspondence with others with whom I have not had the pleasure of talking.

In a letter of this sort I can not hope to convey to you more than my general point of view. Moreover I do not feel that it is necessary to give detailed instructions to a competent medical man. However, in order that you may be familiar with the general policies which obtain, I am sending you a memorandum which I prepared some time ago which I hope will be of service to you. I am also sending you under separate cover a book which contains a series of studies made on various phases of the problems of industrial hygiene and public health which are associated with the distribution and use of Ethyl Fluid and leaded gasoline. I should appreciate it very much if you would examine the memorandum and if you would make some study of the book which I am sending you. I should also be grateful to you if you would communicate with me from time to time, particularly in relation to any special problems or questions which may arise. Wherever I have gone for the first time, I have found certain misunderstandings. It is particularly true that many people have confused the hypothetical dangers of leaded gasoline with the very real dangers arising from contact with the concentrated material. We have attempted to straighten out these misunderstandings and to obtain compliance with the regulations in the matter of handling the Fluid, while at the same time attempting to prevent undue and unwarranted anxiety among persons who handle only the finished product. I am sure you will find difficulties of this sort, and it seems likely that you may be called on from time to time to examine persons who believe they have been injured through lead absorption from the handling of gasoline containing the lead compound. I have never seen a case of lead poisoning on connection with the most severe exposure to gasoline. Nor do I believe that such cases will occur. On the other hand it has been my practice to examine persons with alleged illness of this type with the same care and precision that I would use in the case of persons definitely

and significantly exposed to lead in the hazardous lead trades. It is my feeling that all of my associates should carry on their work in this same spirit. By so doing they will arrive at their own conclusions and at the same time they will not give biased opinions based on the work of others, or on conclusions provided by this office and this laboratory. In this latter connection it might be very interesting to you to know that this laboratory, of which I am the Director, is engaged in the study of occupational disease in general, and as the representatives of the University of Cincinnati it is up to us to maintain an entirely open-minded position in all matters related to industries whose problems we are investigating.

I trust I may have the opportunity at some time to make your acquaintance other than through correspondence. Meanwhile my most cordial greetings.

Sincerely yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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