

Copy to Mr. Graham Edgar

April 12, 1934

Mr. R. U. Harwood
McGill University
Montreal
Canada

Dear Mr. Harwood:

I am naturally quite sympathetic with your interest in the production of central nervous system lesions by the administration of lead compounds. We have been making some observations of this type on experimental animals but we do not have any very definite or specific findings to report. I think, however, I should acquaint you with my skepticism concerning the essential similarity of lesions which may be produced by tetraethyl lead as compared with those which might be produced by inorganic lead compounds. Our chemical observations indicate that the distribution of lead in the brain tissues is somewhat different in the two instances. With this background of information, I should regard it as doubtful whether lesions produced by tetraethyl lead could be regarded as characteristic of lead compounds in general. However, that is a mere detail and the production of specific lesions in any instance would be a matter of considerable importance.

Unfortunately I am not in position to supply you with tetraethyl lead. I have only a very small amount of the pure tetraethyl lead which was supplied to me by the Research Laboratory of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation. Moreover, if I did have the material on hand, I would have some considerable reservation about supplying it to you without first obtaining the consent of the officials of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, since they have adopted the policy that the release of tetraethyl lead to investigators must be in every instance carried out by the designated representative of the Corporation. Accordingly I am referring your letter to Dr. Graham Edgar, Director of Research of the Corporation with the recommendation that the material you request be supplied, if it is possible.

On the assumption that you will probably receive some small supply of tetraethyl lead, I wish to point out the quite considerable danger of handling even small amounts of tetraethyl lead. The compound obviously can be handled with safety by experimental workers but it will not brook any careless handling. It is necessary that precautions be taken against skin contact and against any inhalation. Thus all

Mr. R. U. Harwood

work with animals should be carried out in a hood with strong forced ventilation. I have no doubt you understand the precautions necessary but as an additional precautionary measure, I feel called upon to stress the matter. Moreover I shall be glad to give you any further information which I have which might be of assistance to you.

Cordially yours,

RAK:IS

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.