

PAT BARRY

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Your ref.

Our ref.

13th July 1977.

Dear *Bob*,

Thank you so much for your letter of June 28th. We have been very much involved with the "Cavtat" which sank following a collision three year's ago about four miles off Otranto at the heel of Italy. The ship was carrying a consignment of about 900 lead alkyl drums from Octel for delivery to Yugoslavia. The ship lies at a depth of 300 ft and although at first there was no publicity following its sinking, in the last two years a great deal of attention has been paid to the possible effects on marine ecology and the human population along the Adriatic coast of Italy. Most of the publicity originated from Germany, the main theme being the danger to holiday visitors to the Italian Adriatic holiday resorts and recommending that it would be safer for the Germans and Austrians to spend their holidays at home.

An attempt was made about a year ago by a Yugoslav salvage group to raise the drums from the deck. They were not adequately equipped for the job and two of the divers involved very nearly came to an untimely end. No further attempts were made until this year when a well organised Italian salvage group, in conjunction with assistance from Octel, went into action about three months ago. So far all the drums on the deck have now been recovered and a number scattered within the immediate vicinity of the ship, amounting to a total of about 470; of these, nearly 20% were found to be leaking and about 4% were empty. Something over 400 drums remain in the hold of the vessel and no attempt has yet been made to lift these. It is thought that many of them have been severely damaged but there is a real difficulty posed in reaching them from the point of view of the divers.

I must admit I was one of those who did not consider that the removal of the drums was essential for the protection of marine ecology or human life. Studies of fish and of Crustacea within the immediate vicinity of the ship have shown that there has

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not been any adverse effect. Large areas of the ship and many of the drums were found to be covered ^{with} in Crustacea, this despite the fact that lead had leaked out from about 20% of the drums. The solubility of the lead alkyl compounds is of a very low order, with the TEL about 2 ppm and TML about 10 ppm, and we did not think that any effects would be observed.

In 1966 a ship was wrecked in a storm on rocks about 300 yards off the shore in Cape Town. It was carrying 190 drums as deck cargo, of which only 32 drums were recovered; the remainder disappeared and no sign of them has ever come to light. The area was prolific in shell fish, particularly lobsters and in the first few years following the incident no evidence was found of these having been affected. We believe that the drums and any free TEL were eventually deposited in the Cape Town bay where they disappeared into the sand and silt about a mile off shore.

The recovery of the drums from the "Cavtat" has been an expensive operation so far, and of course will be even more so if ways and means can be devised for their recovery from the hold. The value of the cargo is far outweighed by the cost of the operation, but as the public and political pressures were considerable, I hope that it may be considered to have been worth while.

We knew that Cousteau had been in touch with Ethyl Corporation, as we had information of this from Gary Ter Haar early in the year. As you say in your letter, his interest was principally concerned with his own aggrandizement and I don't believe that he had any real knowledge of the problem or any enlightened concern for the marine environment.

I hope that these comments will give you some idea as to what has been going on. I am pretty certain that the lead alkyl manufacturers in the USA have been kept informed of the recovery and progress.

Anne and I have not yet sold our house but we have someone who is very interested and I think we may effect a sale by the middle of next month. We have nowhere else in view at present, so I think it would be wise for the time being to address your correspondence to me at the office. When we have a new address, I shall let you know of this.

Please give Lucile our very best wishes.

Kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Feb.

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