

October 18, 1962

Air Mail

Dr. P.S.I. Barry
Chief Medical Officer
The Associated Octel Company Limited
Medical Services
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire

Dear Pat:

Your letter of October 3rd caught me at a disadvantage insofar as the reports which you would like to have are concerned. It has been a difficult task to get the report of the California investigation (the use of TML by Standard Oil Company of California) in final form. There are several reasons for this which I won't trouble you with, but only now is the report being assembled in the form in which I am prepared to give it official (so to speak) distribution. I am sure I cannot get it to you in time for your meeting with the Swiss authorities, but I shall get it to you for distribution to them shortly after their return home.

In the midst of the difficulties with the final report, I was able, however, to prepare (or to edit for submission) several articles for publication in the A.M.A. Archives of Environmental Health. These have been submitted, accepted and are appearing in sequence in various issues of the Archives.

For a number of reasons, which you will understand, I am sure, the reprints of these articles will represent a better professional documentation of the position than will the reports of the Laboratory, and I shall send some of these along to you as soon as they are available. These articles present the account of the initial investigation of the potential hazards of the use of TML as conducted in the garage in San Francisco; the corresponding account of the last investigation, as referred to above, of the status of the employee handlers of gasoline containing TML within Standard Oil of California; some of the more pertinent facts with respect to the toxicity of TML as compared to TEL; pertinent data derived from the experience of operating personnel in Baton Rouge engaged in the manufacture of TML.

I am more than sorry that the delay in the issuance of our reports in the various aspects of the TML problem has been so prolonged. But even if you had told me a month earlier of the visit of our Swiss colleagues, I could not have done anything to alter this situation.

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We have had a virtual flood of reports to get out, and what with summer vacations and other interruptions of the smooth flow of the day's work, I have been grinding my teeth over the difficulties. They appear to have been overcome to a large extent, or to be on the way to being overcome in the near future, but in my present state of mind, I expect that other problems will arise to create new hurdles.

If you would be good enough to tell your visitors of the status of the work and the publications, I shall be able to supply them with the proper documents shortly.

We have been greatly impressed (not by any means surprised) by the work on the lead alkyls which continues to come out of Barnes' laboratory. Jill Cremer and others are doing excellent work. Some of our own observations fit in with theirs and are reinforced by them. It becomes increasingly apparent that the metabolism of these alkyls is an highly important aspect of their toxicologic properties, and this is a most interesting situation. Quite apart from these matters, which are of considerably greater than theoretical importance, it is abundantly evident that the introduction of tetramethyllead into use under the prevailing conditions, has not resulted in the hazard of lead absorption among persons who handle such gasoline.

I am able to send you reprints of the manuscript of a paper which I gave at the last annual meeting of the Air Pollution Control Association in Chicago, and I can send you some additional copies of the interim report of the California investigation. The results at the end of 16 months were the same in all respect as those obtained at the end of 9 months, as your guests will see when the final report has been put in their hands.

One of the things that has worried some people in this country is the possibility that there may be significant quantities of organic lead (TEL or TML) in the air of cities or along streets and highways. We and others have been investigating this matter by the use of larger samples of air and more precise methods of analysis than those used previously. These results will not be published for some time, since the data are a part of those which we are gathering in collaborative work with the U.S. Public Health Service, the Health Department of the City of Philadelphia and the State Health Department in California. The combined data demonstrate, beyond any doubt, that this is no problem. It is virtually impossible to find the vapors of organic lead at any point other than in close proximity to the escape of considerable quantities of gasoline vapor - as for example, at a service station, during the ~~filling~~ filling of the tank of a car, while the filling is being done and vapor is being displaced from the tank by the flow of liquid into it. Even so, one has to be near the operation, in the direction of air currents, to find a significant quantity. The practical proof of this fact is found in the fact that the men who service these cars do not absorb enough lead to bring about any increase in their output of lead in the urine even after more than a year of such regular occupational exposure.

I think you should, if you can, supply each of your visitors with a copy

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of the Harben Lectures, with my compliments. If you do not have paper back copies for this purpose, or if you think it might be more fitting to have them provided with cloth bound copies, directly from me, just send me their names and addresses, and I shall be only too happy to supply them.

As I indicated above, we have been very busy at the Laboratory, and you will be interested to know that the new addition to the Laboratory (which will give us more than a third more space) is coming along nicely. It has not caused us inconvenience up to this point, and will not for some time, for the reason that no attempt has been made as yet to break through into the present building. This will come in time, but not for some months. The structural work on the third floor will be completed this month - i.e., the concrete and steel skeleton - and it is hoped that the roof can be put on before the worst of our winter comes upon us. If so, it will be ready for occupancy by this time next year.

Mrs. Kehoe is having her usual difficulties in this autumnal season with pollens and other suspended material in the air, and time does not improve this situation. We manage to live above these and other difficulties, and while she is miserable at times, she is capable generally of ignoring her disabilities. From every other point of view it is a delightful time of year. The color in the leaves has been gorgeous, and the weather, generally, has been mild and sunny.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

Enclosures: 8 copies of Interim Report
12 copies of reprint "The Hygienic Aspects of the Production
and use of Lead Antiknock Compounds".

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