

May 6, 1960

Dr. Kenneth R. Fourcher
Standard-Vacuum Oil Company
1000 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, New York

Dear Doctor Fourcher:

I am sending to you herewith one copy of each of two reports that relate to tetramethyl lead. The toxicologic investigation of the lead alkyls, so far as it has gone at our hands, was done many years ago, and was dropped when the use of TML seemed unwise. The work was not published for lack of time in part, but mainly because it was incomplete. We are now extending this work and reexamining what has been done. Therefore, we shall content ourselves with the issuance of this brief report until a later time, so as not to complicate the situation. We shall make the newer and better information available as soon as it has been obtained in satisfactory form.

The report of the field survey is self-explanatory. As to the problem arising in the manufacture of TML, its blending with gasoline, and its role in connection with the cleaning of gasoline storage tanks, we consider it necessary only to be on the alert to make sure that the precautions required in the corresponding operations with tetraethyl lead are carried out faithfully at all times. The measures of control here are designed to eliminate dangerous exposure, and if they are carried out properly there will be no actual difficulty. It is admitted that the potential opportunities for exposure are greater.

The real problem, as I see it, is that of the handling of gasoline containing a much more volatile lead compound. As investigated thus far, this does not appear to be a serious problem in the practical sense. Time only, and further investigation (which is under way on the West Coast), will tell whether this is of more than theoretical importance. I have no great anxiety about this, but I don't want things to go with such a rush that the entire industry will get itself into a situation from which it cannot escape without embarrassment. Moreover, when this product (in gasoline or otherwise) goes into foreign countries, the situation should be explained properly to the responsible authorities, for if this is not done by people who understand the situation and remember the early history of TEL, there will be trouble. We cannot afford to give the present industry a black eye because of undue haste, and failure to pave the way for it in so far as this may be necessary. The issue here is not an immediate advantage but a stable and secure hygienic status.

I am saying these things to you because I am sure you will understand me, whereas some of your associates may not. Lead in gasoline is still viewed

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with some suspicion in some foreign countries, and it is necessary to have evidence rather than an opinion to justify commercial steps that pose questions concerning health. There are also regulations in certain countries and these must be looked at carefully. A little caution, therefore, may save us all a great deal of trouble.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kenoe, M. D.

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Enclosures

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