

March 26, 1932

Mr. T. R. A. Bevan,
Ethyl Export Corporation,
Abford House, Victoria
London, S. W. 1.
England.

Dear Mr. Bevan:

Please accept my thanks for the translated copy of Professor Bordas' report. It is an interesting document.

I do not feel that there are any questions propounded by Professor Bordas which are not capable of easy and accurate answer. On the other hand, after having talked with the gentleman himself and after discussing the matter with Dr. Calingaert, who has seen him frequently, I do not believe anything would be gained by any further discussion of the matter. I do not believe that the most adequate information would alter his opinions or conclusions in any manner, for it is quite clear that he has not been guided by information but by a previous conception and by an attitude of mind which is so common among Europeans of a certain type.

I do not believe, therefore, that there is any point in my making any detailed comments on this report. I was in New York last week when the whole matter was discussed with Mr. Webb and Dr. Calingaert, with such conclusions as can best be conveyed to you by Mr. Webb. There is only one comment which I would make, which I think answers the entire matter. I have never felt that measurements of dust in garages, streets, and elsewhere were likely to give any very conclusive answer to a practical question. I have felt that the only way one could directly measure the exposure associated with the handling and use of Ethyl Gasoline was to study individuals who had experienced such exposure, and to use their experience as a measure, not of what might happen, but of what actually did happen. Thus, we are now fortified with information of this kind in such a way that I believe we can accurately assess the magnitude of any and all exposures to lead related to the Ethyl Gasoline problem. I have been extremely cautious in the information which I have given out on this matter. I have always said that up to the present time no evidence has been obtained which would lead one to believe that the hazards of lead absorption are in any way significant. I think I can safely say at the present time, that a careful study of the entire matter discloses the fact, surprising as it may seem to some people, that there is no

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actual hazard as regards lead involved in the distribution and handling of Ethyl Gasoline. We have succeeded in showing that there is no measurable lead absorption even in the most exposed workmen who have to do with the handling of Ethyl Gasoline. Furthermore, we have shown the order of magnitude of exposure which is necessary to produce a measurable effect. Thus, the combination of these two sets of facts give us the means of saying that any hazards of lead absorption related to Ethyl Gasoline must be so minute as to be insignificant, since no measurable effect has been produced by them.

I probably said this to you previously. I am merely repeating it for the purpose of indicating a decided change in my attitude during the past two or three years. The facts are now sufficiently clear that there is indeed no reason for the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation to adopt a defensive attitude such as has been the better part of wisdom heretofore. We are in position to say definitely that the public health hazards which have been feared in the past, are non-existent. I believe you will appreciate that this is a considerable change in attitude, and is simply due to the collection of uncontrovertible information which was not available even at the time of the British investigation. It is requiring a considerable amount of time to put this information in shape to be generally available. I have been working now for more than three months on the job, and it is only about half completed. I am expecting to continue to work as rapidly as possible, but I cannot see how the job can be finished earlier than another three or four months from now.

It has been a pleasure to hear from you, and I hope that I may again hear from you soon. I shall be very much interested in being informed of the developments which it seems likely to me will take place on the Continent within the next several months. I am not anticipating the necessity of going abroad this summer, but I can fully appreciate the possibility that it may be advisable for me to do so if things begin to move and there is any likelihood of actual commercial development in several countries on the Continent. I feel very deeply the necessity of having any mixing equipment which may be installed kept up to the highest possible standards of safety and simplicity of operation. I know, also, that it will be important to have careful medical supervision for a time. I do not feel that the latter is a matter which I can safely leave to anyone else, since after all I shall undoubtedly be held responsible for any

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difficulties which might develop. Thus, I am anxious to have the best first-hand information, and I believe that you are undoubtedly the best person to give it to me since you will be in much closer touch with affairs on the Continent than will anybody else. Thus, I would appreciate very much any information which you pass on to me from time to time.

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

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