

December 1, 1950

Air Mail

Mr. C. H. Noble,
The Associated Ethyl Company Limited,
Artillery House, Artillery Row,
London, S.W.1, England.

Dear Beery:

I was sorry indeed to have your letter of October 12 with its bad news. It would have had a reply from me promptly, if there had been anything I could do about it. The only thing I can do or say is to support your position that adequate supervision must be provided in the performance of work of this sort. Both in this country and elsewhere, we have repeatedly had evidence brought to us that it is essential to have someone on the scene who will insist upon the necessary precautionary measures. Unfortunately, it is quite certain, that men who have worked on jobs of this sort without bad consequences, will come to regard the precautions as excessive and unnecessary. Under such circumstances a tragedy is always necessary to provide proof. The proof has been provided time after time, but unfortunately it does not come to the attention of the right people in such a way as to convince them and keep them convinced.

With respect to your letter of November 2 and the news about Japan, all I can tell you is that the situation is entirely fluid. The matter of manufacturing activities has been raised as a question, but not as a matter of definite policy so far as any of us in Ethyl Corporation know. It seems most unlikely, and, in fact, I should think it impossible that any very serious action would be taken in this matter by Ethyl Corporation without consulting me. I think it is fair to say that the point of view concerning the manner in which manufacturing activities would be carried on in Japan, if they have to be, would be the same in New York as they would be in London. I feel confident that Ethyl Corporation would not like to embark upon a share of a manufacturing enterprise in Japan. Circumstances might be such that it would be compelled to do so, but I feel sure that it would be done with the utmost reluctance, and only as a last resort. On the other hand, I feel sure that the position would not be taken that such activities would be a matter of little or no consequence to Ethyl Corporation, and that they should be embarked on by somebody else without participation on the part of Ethyl Corporation. It would seem to me, that the only circumstance in which Ethyl Corporation would be content to have someone else do the job would be that of its being undertaken under the guidance and direction of Associated Ethyl. All of this at the present time seems improbable, but the world is full of improbabilities at the present time, and I am in no position to anticipate what may come of military and political and economic developments in the Far East.

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I shall certainly keep my eye on the situation, and therefore anything further that comes to your attention might well be passed on to me for my information. It seems likely that I will know about it from other sources, but I would prefer that you would make no assumptions in that regard.

As it happens Bill Machle is in Japan at the present time on some mission. I have no idea of what he is doing or with whom he is dealing, but I have a notion that he will know something about this matter when he returns, and I shall certainly tap his information at the earliest possible time.

With all best regards to yourself and your associates,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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