

February 7, 1941

Mr. Lester B. Roberts  
Casilla de Correo No. 1704  
Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
South America

Dear Les:

Slowly but steadily I have been working out from under a mountain of accumulated work, and at last I have reached a point where I can give something more than a passing glance to uncompleted matters in connection with my South American trip. I had reached this point approximately a week ago, when the epidemic of Flu here cut me down and put me to bed for a week. I think that I should probably have a few more weeks of sunshine, and therefore I might be tempted to return to South America, but I am too familiar with the consequences of accumulated work, for after all one does have to pay rather heavily for an absence of some weeks.

I promised to send you a number of things and these will be coming along to you under separate cover. You will find 19 sets of the loose-leaf books for the articles which have been supplied to doctors and others. I promised to send 24 but I find that that would take most of my available supply, and so I reduced the number to 19. If you need any others, please let me know for I can obtain more anytime it is necessary. With these I am sending a box containing the binding screws for fastening the books together. These will be found to be just the right length for binding the entire set of copies, if the back is removed from each one of the reprints.

I am sending you 12 copies of the Spanish translation of the article "An Appraisal of the Hazards Associated with the Use and Distribution of Gasoline Containing Tetraethyl Lead - Part I". This is the edition which was translated in the Argentine, and it will be more useful for your purposes than the one translated in Mexico.

I am also sending you several sets of reprints of recent articles from the laboratory which may be useful to you.

Charlie wanted me to send a new white face-piece for his own use in connection with his supervisory activities. I have arranged to have this sent and I dare say you will receive it before you receive the material which I am sending. For his greater convenience, I had the Mine Safety Appliances people include a connecting tube to the canister. This may not be necessary but I thought it might be advantageous rather than the face-piece alone. In as much as I have not sent in my expense account to the New York office as yet, by reason of some delay in obtaining information that I require, I have seen fit to pay for this face-piece at this end, and I will credit it against my expense account. Therefore you will not receive any bill for this, or if you should receive a bill through error, you will recognize it as such.

In the same manner I have handled the subscription to the Journal of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology, which I ordered in the name of Dr. Cruz Coke and Dr. Schiaffino. I will pay for these when the bill is submitted and will credit this sum also against my expense account.

With respect to the sum of \$118.00 which I owe you, I have sent this in accordance with your instructions to your bank, and you will undoubtedly receive a notification of this deposit in the near future. Thanks very much for the assistance which it gave.

I think Charlie and I discussed the matter of certain information which I wanted on South American matters at some convenient date. However it will not hurt to make mention of these things. Eventually I should like to have complete information on activities in South America in the following respects. I should like a list of the lead concentrations used in gasoline in various parts of South America, together with the quantities and types of Fluid used in the various plants. With this information, and with any other which may be necessary, I shall be able to see clearly the exact degree of the use of Ethyl Fluid in all of the South American countries in aviation and motor gasoline, both private and military, regular and premium. Obviously I shall not be able to keep all of this in my head but I like to have my records kept in an up to date fashion, so that I shall be able to determine at any time what is going on within a given country, and what is taking place at a given mixing plant.

I think we mentioned the fact that the reports of the type which have been supplied for a number of plants are entirely obsolete. My original purpose in asking for these reports was merely to obtain

some idea of the quantities of Fluid handled and the amount of gasoline produced at a number of points concerning which we had no adequate information. With the inauguration of regular trips of supervision, these reports became redundant and unnecessary, and they should be discontinued so as not to visit any unnecessary inconvenience upon customer companies. In other words our source of information in the future should come from your office and not from the offices of the customer companies.

I try to keep on hand copies of all the official placards which are used in connection with the operation of mixing plants. If I am not mistaken, you had new placards printed in Spanish, and I am in some doubt as to whether you have them in Portuguese. In any case, if and when these are available, I should like one or two copies of them for my file.

I think this completes all the matters of business except that I have written to Dr. Ottolina in confirmation of the discussion which we had, and I have sent you a copy of the letter which I have written. I sincerely hope that you did not feel that the arrangements which we agreed to were in great error on the side of generosity. After talking at some length with Dr. Ottolina, I came to the conclusion that he was the proper man for the job, unless we were to decide that the expense of this work was too great and that it should be turned over to the refinery doctors. Having come to this conclusion, it seemed inadvisable to bargain with him over the question of fees, since the fee which he had in mind was apparently not exorbitant in relation to medical practice in his country. Perhaps I am not a very good bargainer anyhow, but my feeling was that we should either accept the terms which he considered fair, or to dispense with his services entirely. The latter seemed inadvisable and, therefore, the arrangement was made as indicated in my letter. You will note, however, that a loop hole was left which will enable us to reconsider the entire matter on its merits, and it is my feeling that if the cost of this type of medical supervision is too great, we shall have to change the policy completely, and resort to the services of refinery doctors. You will not be surprised to realize that we consider the latter a make shift, and in view of what happens to most of the refinery doctors, calling upon their services will represent merely a nominal shifting of responsibility. In other words

if we are convinced that there is no danger to the workmen and if medical supervision is, therefore, unnecessary, then we can ask the refinery doctors to accept the nominal responsibility for the work, with a full realization on our part that they will probably do nothing at all.

I am writing Ray, giving him a brief resume of my trip to South America, and in general reporting that all is well. I could heartily wish that things were equally as well with him.

There is nothing further to report from here. As I have indicated previously, I have been literally swamped with work ever since I returned, and with the divergences created by the Christmas holidays plus a brief period of illness, I have hardly been able to see over the work that has to be done. I am now almost up to the point which I reached before I left Cincinnati for South America, and in the near future I hope to get at some of the work which I am supposed to be doing. I don't know how this happened but we seemed to have taken on more work than we can do, and almost everybody else in the laboratory seem to be under considerable pressure. As yet we have not been selected out for work in connection with the Defense Program, and I am very greatly relieved that this is the case.

One of the jobs which I had to do shortly after I returned home was to prepare a paper for a Literary Club, of which I am a member in Cincinnati. My best bet seemed to be to write something on South America. In as much as I had become an authority on the subject, I undertook to write a series of sketches which portrayed some of my impressions. I shall not send this along to you, but when you come back to the States and visit me, you may be interested in seeing how little one can say in some thousands of words. At any rate I had a good time putting my impressions together, and although I am fairly sure that such an expert as yourself in South American matters will find much to criticize, I hope you may find that I have not been entirely wrong.

I am looking forward to your return, and I sincerely hope things work out in such a way that this can be reasonably soon. I shall be very much interested in any further developments which either make it necessary for you to remain, or which will enable you to return. I shall be glad to hear from you at your convenience.

Please give Charlie my kindest regards and tell him I shall be writing to him very shortly, in fact just as soon as I have gotten the necessary business correspondence reduced to nothing.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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