

June 22, 1948

Dr. E. P. Luongo, Medical Director,
General Petroleum Corporation,
108 West Second Street,
Los Angeles 12, California.

Dear Doctor Luongo:

I deliberately wrote the attached letter with the idea of sending a copy of it to Doctor Rutherford Johnstone. My purpose in doing this was to make sure that Doctor Johnstone would have no doubt about my point of view on this matter. In this connection I think I should point out to you that no one who has not had long association with the many problems of this industry could possibly know how to evaluate the potential hazards of lead absorption associated with the numerous operations relating to equipment of various kinds. Therefore, I make every effort, when the opportunity presents itself, to clarify some of the situations that arise.

I think I should point out another matter. My associates and I, over a period of years, have made ourselves available, in connection with our responsibilities to Ethyl Corporation, as well as our agreement with the United States Public Health Service, to investigate carefully any and all lead exposures or alleged lead exposures associated with the handling of tetraethyl lead and leaded gasoline. It has been our hope and our wish, over the years, that any cases of this sort arising in the petroleum industry would be referred to us for examination and study. Naturally, we do not object, nor would we have any right to object to any actions taken by the responsible medical people in the petroleum industry to arrive at their own conclusions concerning their employees by any means that suggest themselves. On the other hand, knowing that the average medical man who has had no direct experience with the problem knows nothing at all about tetraethyl lead poisoning or the hazards associated with the industry, we have undertaken to discourage so far as possible the calling in of medical consultants for diagnostic purposes. All too frequently the issue is confused, and we are called upon later to clarify situations that need not have occurred. Not infrequently the diagnosis of tetraethyl lead poisoning has been missed, and also the reverse has occurred in a number of instances, and we have been put to a great deal of trouble. For this reason we have undertaken to offer our services, so that we should be informed at the earliest possible time of any clinical problems of this sort. Their prompt investigation will frequently save everybody a great deal of difficulty.

I am not in any way being critical of your use of Rutherford Johnstone. Not only would I be unduly presumptuous in even suggesting a criticism in this matter, but I would also be guilty of throwing some doubt on Johnstone's competence, when as a matter of fact, I know him to be a very sound man in this field of medical practice. I

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want to suggest that it is both our purpose and our attitude to serve your company and others of the petroleum industry, in matters related to the potential hazards of the use of tetraethyl lead. Therefore, you need not hesitate to call upon us for advice and assistance at any time.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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