

September 19, 1955

To: Mr. H. A. Savage

Subject: Memorandum on Publication
of Results of Detroit Work on
Lead in Exhaust of Automobiles

From: Robert A. Kehoe

✓ It appears that Messrs. Scales and Boudreau believe that I was in agreement with them, and indeed that I proposed, that the results of the Detroit work should be published in a medical journal (The American Journal of Hygiene). It was my opinion that in the event two articles were to be prepared (one on the technical aspects of the work, and another on its hygienic significance), one should appear in that Journal if possible. On the basis of the discussion at the Staff meeting which I attended on July 14, at which it appeared to me that the consensus was for the avoidance of raising too much of an issue in hygiene and medical circles, and at which the group favored the publication of one article, if any, I concluded that the best procedure would be that Detroit prepare an article for publication in a technical journal of a type best suited to their specific purpose - that of investigating certain phenomenon concerned with the end products of combustion in the internal combustion engine, as such products appear at the tail pipe of the exhaust system.

I thought that the article should be prepared with the above end in view, and that it should then be determined what, if anything, should be added, by way of reference to the hygienic implications of the work. Evidently I did not make myself clear, and I gather that I must have missed something in the discussion, for I left the meeting with the idea that my view was shared by Messrs. Scales and Boudreau. They evidently took the other tack and believed that I was in full agreement. It would appear that they (or I) or all of us were so willing to agree that we (or I) failed to express ourselves precisely as to what we were agreeing to. Be this as it may, my opinion, in view of the high quality of the work and the importance of establishing priority for its accomplishment, is that this work should be published as a factual description of the fate of the lead which is in the leaded fuel employed by automobiles.

As to where it should be published, I should consider it wise to put it in a journal available to technical people in the field of work of the primary authors. This will establish priority, and come to the attention of the technical people in the automobile and petroleum industry who are most concerned, and who, also, will recognize and acknowledge this contribution of Ethyl Corporation to their knowledge and to their interests.

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To:

Mr. H. A. Savage

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I should avoid more than brief general reference to the hygienic significance of the matter, in the feeling that this will be apparent, in the main, to those who have reason to be interested in the air pollution problem. Mention can be made, if desired, of the fact that this work explains, in considerable measure, the results that have been obtained in the investigation of the lead content of urban atmosphere, which hitherto has appeared to be lower than might have been anticipated. (The results of much of our work have been published.)

If this is done, the article will attract little attention outside of technical circles in the industries involved; it will not precipitate consideration and discussion of the air pollution with lead, on the part of physicians (few of whom will see it), hygienists (who either will not see it or will not appreciate fully its significance in the general situation), or lay busy-bodies or crack-pots (who are not technically minded and would not react appreciably to a direct, non-controversial presentation of the type suggested.)

There is little doubt that we shall have occasion to write about this problem later, when our data (on city air and on the people exposed thereto) have been extended considerably. When that time comes, considerably later, we shall wish to refer to this article and to point out its significance. That, in my opinion - that is, when the questions concerning the potential hazard can be answered satisfactorily - is the time to bring to the fore the true significance of the work and the results, in relation to the public health. Thereby we shall raise the question and at the same time dispose of it.

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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