

~~Copy to Mr. Tully~~

January 17, 1940

Dr. W. F. de Priester
Tandjong Priok
Batavia

Dear Doctor de Priester:-

I have received some correspondence through the Associated Ethyl Company Limited which indicates that there has been some discussion about certain lead analyses which you requested in the case of workmen engaged in the mixing of Ethyl Fluid with gasoline.

It occurs to me that it may be wise to refer to our own practice in this regard in commenting upon the necessity for these analyses. We have been supervising the activities of several thousand men who are engaged in this work in the United States, and we believe from a practical point of view the clinical examination of these men is an adequate means of maintaining hygienic control. On the other hand from time to time over a period of years, we have selected a group of these men and have studied their urinary and fecal lead excretion with the idea of determining whether they were absorbing abnormal amounts of lead. I believe I have sent you reports of the results of these and other examinations which demonstrate quite clearly that the occupational exposure of these men is negligible. As a result of these studies we are quite sure that if the equipment is kept in order, and if the men carry out their work in accordance with the regulations, there will be no lead exposure or lead poisoning, and there will be no abnormal results in the analyses of excreta.

I do not wish to discourage you on this account from making any tests which you feel are necessary to inform yourself properly as to the occupational lead exposure of men under your supervision. Consequently I feel it will be entirely proper for you to have these analyses made once a year if you wish and pass the cost of these on as you did before. My only query in the matter has to do with the accuracy of the analyses which are carried out. I should be very much

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interested in knowing what has been the experience of those who do the analyses for you, and what equipment is available to them for the purpose, and what methods of analysis they employ. I raise this question because there is no more difficult clinical test than that of making analyses for lead on the excreta. It is better, of course, not to make the analyses at all, unless they can be made by methods which are so precise that they will not yield misleading results. Our experience in this country has shown us that few laboratories and few chemists are properly equipped to carry out these analyses, and that, moreover, very few of our colleagues realize the care which is necessary in order to collect samples that will not be contaminated with lead in the process of collection. I should wish, therefore, to be quite certain that you have the means of obtaining precise results before giving my blanket approval to these analyses.

With these ideas in mind, I should appreciate it very much if you would tell me what precautions were taken in the collection of the samples, and how the analyses were made.

Cordially yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

cc Mr. Fossett
cc Mr. Tully

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