

Dr. H. A. Yeni Komshian
American University
Syria

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Dr. H. A. Yeni Komshian
American University
Beirut
Syria

Dear Doctor Komshian:

Quite some time ago I was informed by the London office of Ethyl Export Corporation, that you had agreed tentatively to provide the necessary medical supervision for men employed in mixing Ethyl Fluid with gasoline in your vicinity. Through an over-sight, I neglected to write you at once. I hope this has not occasioned any inconvenience to you in your work. It has been my practice to communicate with physicians who undertake the supervision of this work and to give them the benefit of the experience which we have had over a period of years, and also to provide such information as is available in published form. In the period of the past twelve or thirteen years during which gasoline containing tetraethyl lead has been distributed in the United States, a large number of men have been engaged at plants in which the fluid is mixed with gasoline. Our experience has shown that when these plants are built and operated properly, and when the workmen follow the regulations provided, no danger of lead poisoning exists. As a matter of fact, there have been no cases of lead poisoning in this occupation within our knowledge, and we are quite confident that if the supervision is maintained, no difficulties will occur. It is largely because of this that we have attempted to obtain the services of competent and conscientious physicians for the supervision of workmen in these plants in all parts of the world. The one thing we fear most is that the workmen will become careless after a period of time during which no injury has occurred. It is our expectation that the medical men will see to it that the men are properly warned and that they will keep on the alert in carrying out the regulations. We also expect the medical men to see that the plants are kept in order and for this reason the physicians should make it a point to inspect the plants at regular intervals and to see that everything is kept in an orderly state.

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I am sending you herewith reprints covering a series of published articles and also a copy of the latest version of the regulations. A very considerable amount of investigation has been carried out in this field and the results of these investigations make quite clear, I believe, the source of danger. There has been a tendency to confuse the actual dangers associated with the handling of Fluid with the purely hypothetical dangers arising from the handling of gasoline containing small quantities of tetraethyl lead. Certain articles, which I am sending you, deal with the problem of leaded gasoline. Our experience, as well as our experimental data, show quite clearly, I believe, that there are no important dangers associated with the use and handling of gasoline containing tetraethyl lead in the commercially permissible concentrations. I do not believe you are likely to have any difficulties on this score although it often occurs that some anxiety develops in a new area of distribution.

I would appreciate your writing me from time to time, and especially so if difficulties of any kind occur, as I wish to keep in touch with all of the consultants engaged in this work in order that I may be sure that any difficulties that may occur are reported to me.

Let me call your attention to one matter of considerable hygienic importance. We have prescribed certain regulations for the cleaning of storage tanks which have contained leaded gasoline. You will note certain special regulations directed toward this procedure in the book of regulations which I am sending you. It is quite necessary that these regulations be carried out in detail. I think it would be wise if you would call the attention of the management of the plants under your supervision to these regulations and to the dangers associated with failure to comply with these regulations.

In the articles which I am sending you, you will also find a memorandum which I have prepared to express the general medical policies which should obtain in carrying out this work.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your work and my thanks for your willingness to accept this responsibility.

Cordially yours,

RAK:ls

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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