

December 14, 1961

Mr. Gaylord E. Hold
Director of Research & Development
Wynn Oil Company
1151 West Fifth Street
Azusa, California

Dear Mr. Hold:

I find myself greatly embarrassed by the position in which I have put myself, The Kettering Laboratory and your Company in the matter of the work done in relation to your product which is designed as an aid in lubrication. This was one of those things which I undertook to do more or less with my left hand, in the course of other duties of somewhat related type. I even arranged to visit your plant in connection with other work that took me to the West Coast. The work was designed and carried out satisfactorily, from the aspect of the one purpose in mind, and for that I make no apology. On the other hand I have not found (or made) the time necessary to put the information together in a formal report since there was no necessity for haste in so doing. This, I know, seems strange, and I shall not attempt to explain it, beyond saying that a number of circumstances, including certain changes in the staff, put us, particularly myself, behind a considerable backlog of editorial work, while keeping pace with the current work so as to avoid a repetition of the difficulty. I am pleased by what I've been able to achieve in this direction in 1961, but I am still a bit behind, and your little job (in terms of the time required to attend to it) still remains to be completed.

I have taken the trouble to explain my difficulty to this extent only because I am doubly sorry not to be able to go along with your wishes as expressed in your letter of August 25th and its enclosed draft of a statement "to whom it may concern". When I saw this letter on my return from my vacation - some of which was spent in editorial work in, to be sure, an ideal spot where I was not under pressure, I had a sense of dismay which led me to put it back for more careful consideration after I had dealt with matters which required immediate handling. Unfortunately, there has been no let-up since that time in the pressing affairs of the Laboratory.

Now as to the reason for my dismay, and a considered statement of my position. I cannot but believe that you have misunderstood the purpose and scope of our work for your Company. I suggest, therefore, that you reread my letter of June 10, 1960 to Dr. Gleason, in which I stated the case clearly, simply and completely. This is all we did. What we undertook to do was to determine whether lead was being absorbed out of your product in its somewhat concentrated form under the conditions of the day's work. I examined no men, except in the superficial manner

in which one can note freedom from obvious illness, and freedom of the skin of the hands and wrists, from dermatoses. Such medical work as was done was carried out by your Dr. Hankins.

I would not, under any circumstances, subscribe to your statement concerning the state of health of your employees. I would not agree that they showed no signs of the absorption of potentially toxic materials in association with their work. I looked for only one thing - namely the absorption of lead - and if lead is not to be mentioned specifically, there is no point whatever in referring to our investigation. I must emphasize that this was the sole reason for our making these observations, and if your Company has no intention of speaking of lead, it should not refer at all to what we did. Your statement, therefore, is completely unacceptable. This is not a testing laboratory, or one to provide any testimonial or material for advertising. We have provided you with information which should enable you to convince potential customers (individually, not through the press) that they have nothing to fear from the aspect of the absorption of lead. Any other toxicological considerations are entirely irrelevant, since we never even considered them, much less investigated them.

I return the memorandum to you with my critical comments on specific parts of it, so that there will be no doubt in your mind about my views and the reasons for them.

I am unhappy, as indicated above, about this situation, and the only manner in which I can make amends is to complete the report to you at the earliest possible time. When you have it you will be in somewhat better position to deal with the specific problem with which it is concerned. Not much better, perhaps, since my letter to Dr. Gleason is a realistic summary of what we could say. I think, however, that I should be quite definite in saying that we do not consent to the use of the work of the Laboratory in any writing or publication except in the conventional manner of a scientific reference to a document. We do not look with favor on the paraphrasing of our reports, or their being abstracted in any other than the conventional scientific manner. On the other hand, we are prepared to authorize the use of the reports, themselves, or authorized copies or abstracts of them as evidence in support of statements of fact. For example if a customer of yours wants evidence in support of proper statements of fact concerning a specific and relevant hazard - in this instance the hazard of percutaneous absorption of lead - our report, or an authorized abstract of it can be submitted in substantiation of the facts. If you will let me know how this policy can be implemented in a practical manner, I shall be glad to comment on it, and make such suggestion as I can toward the achievement of your purposes. You should bear in mind, however, the precise scope and purpose of our observations, which were not designed to give blanket approval of your Company's products from the hygienic viewpoint, but only to show that they were free of the hazard of lead absorption and lead poisoning.

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I trust that this will not be too much of a disappointment to you. I am prepared also to assure you that a full report of the work done on your Company's behalf will be forthcoming very shortly after January first.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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Enclosure

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