

Bayley, Dr. H. H. Bay Cottage,
Barbados, British West Indies.

January 13, 1942

AIR MAIL

Dr. H. H. Bayley,
Bay Cottage,
Barbados,
British West Indies.

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Beckles Rd
St. Michael
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Dear Dr. Bayley:

Mr. C. L. Risso-Gill wrote to me a few days ago about the plant for mixing Ethyl Fluid with gasoline in Barbados and told me of your willingness to undertake the medical supervision of the men who would do the work. I hasten, therefore, to give you certain information about this work, and to send you under separate cover a series of articles in which some of the more important matters are discussed.

Let me begin by emphasizing the fact that if the mixing plant is built and operated properly, and if the men follow the detailed instructions for carrying out their work, there will be no difficulty. The equipment and the instructions are based on the necessity, and also the possibility, of completely avoiding exposure to Ethyl Fluid through skin contact and inhalation. The material is indeed dangerous, as you will see from the study of the article on its toxicity and mode of absorption. It produces a clinical picture of lead poisoning, which is different from that associated with any other lead compound, as you will see from the article describing the clinical tetraethyl lead poisoning. It is quite unnecessary that such poisoning should occur, and it will not occur, unless carelessness creeps into the maintenance of the plant. It is to avoid such carelessness and the disregard for danger that follows a long period without difficulty, that we have set up the type of medical supervision which is in use. It may be that the workmen will be apprehensive for a time, and during this period they should be seen frequently enough to reassure them. It is much more likely that they will lose all regard for the dangers after a period of freedom from trouble, and therefore, it is necessary to carry out the medical examinations at intervals sufficient to prevent such relaxation. The slightest evidence of lead absorption can be regarded as proof of either carelessness on the part of the men or inadequacy in the equipment, and for this reason, the examinations should be made thoroughly and carefully. These matters are mentioned in a memorandum to medical men, which I am sending you and which presents our general point of view. I am also sending you a book of the regulations just in case Mr. Risso-Gill has failed

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to supply you with a copy.

I wish to call your attention to one additional point; namely, the dangers associated with the cleaning of storage tanks. Under certain conditions which are not fully understood, and which are, therefore, unpredictable, the sludge and muck in the bottom of a storage tank containing leaded gasoline may contain comparatively high concentrations of tetraethyl lead. When such a tank is entered for cleaning, unprotected persons may inhale dangerous quantities of lead or may be exposed to dangers through contact of their skin with the sludge. Accordingly, we have drawn up regulations to cover these points, and these will be found on the last page of the book of regulations. These regulations must be followed rigidly and intelligently. It is necessary that the dangers be understood and that men who engage in this work will have continuous, intelligent supervision to the end that the regulations may be followed both in principle and in detail.

I should appreciate it very much if you would keep me informed of any difficulties which may occur or of any problems which may arise which seem not to be covered in the published material. I should be glad to be of any possible assistance to you and to maintain such contacts through correspondence as may be mutually advantageous.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kenoe, M. D.

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