

September 5, 1936

Mr. O. B. Lewis
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation
Chrysler Building
New York City
New York

Dear Mr. Lewis:

Not knowing how complete your records are on the recent Savannah cases and because of probable sequences, I am herewith giving you our complete data on the matter.

On August 25-'36 I received a call from Mr. George Warren informing me that six men, employees of the Standard Oil Company of Kentucky's refinery at Savannah, Georgia, were ill. The physician in charge, to the best of my knowledge, had at that time made no diagnosis. These men had entered a tank (No.1) on August 18th for the purpose of cleaning it. The tank had previously contained leaded gasoline. The tank had been treated adequately for the removal of gasoline vapours but our information shows that no precautions whatever had been taken so far as exposure to dust from deposits was concerned. The first man became ill twenty-four hours after exposure and the others became ill successively. The last, a seventh man not mentioned in the first communication, we understand became ill eight days after the first. We are not certain at present whether the seventh man's exposure occurred at the same time as the first six or not.

Immediately after the conversation with Mr. Warren, Dr. Train, the physician in charge of the cases, was called. Dr. Train, not being familiar with the exposure factors, had not arrived at a diagnosis. The men at this time (August 25) were ambulatory. In spite of the failure of diagnosis, treatment had been along the lines which would have been properly pursued had the diagnosis been made. Dr. Train was advised that the cases were undoubtedly lead intoxication and therapeutic suggestions made. Most of the medical staff being out of town, no one was sent immediately to Savannah, but Dr. Kitzmiller was due to arrive there in a few days. Containers for the collection of urine were immediately forwarded and the samples were collected on either the 26th or 27th of August. (These samples later were shown

to contain excessive quantities of lead.) A letter received from Dr. Train (copy enclosed) states all men were hospitalized, suggested treatment followed and that improvement had been shown. The date of Dr. Kitzmiller's arrival is not definitely known but it was about August 31st. The patients were seen by him with Dr. Train and treatment was continued by the two physicians. By that time it was apparent that the intoxication was more severe than had been originally judged, and on September 3rd there occurred a fatal outcome of one case with three others in grave condition. On September 4th two additional fatalities occurred. On this date there remain at least 1 case whose prognosis is bad.

On August 25th, after conversations with Mr. Warren and Dr. Train, a letter was written to Mr. W. G. Violette of the Standard Oil Company of Kentucky, advising him of the situation and urging him to prompt action to avoid further difficulty. A copy of that letter was forwarded to you. On August 26th a second call from Mr. Warren advised us that tank cleaning procedures were being continued and that the method remained very questionable. Conversations were then had with Mr. Violette on the 26th and Mr. Glossop on the 27th, wherein were discussed proper methods to be followed in future procedures.

This constitutes our complete information at the present time.

Very truly yours,

LWS:is

L. W. Sanders, M.D.

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