

COPY

16th, May, 1928.

E. W. Webb, Esq.,
25 Broadway,
New York City, U. S. A.

Dear Earle:

You will have naturally received my cable long before you will get this letter and I do not know if there is anything much more tangible than I have given you, from necessity, very shortly in my cable concerning yesterday's ridiculous evidence of Coplans before the Committee.

However, I will give you a few typical sidelights which will show the calibre of the man and his lack of work in his so-called personal investigations. The meeting was terribly hashed up and disjointed due both to the attitude of Coplans and his lack of knowledge and of tangible data given to the Committee.

In the first place his appearance was totally against him, he looking exactly like a little East-side Jew that we see wherever we turn in New York. He started in the usual typical Jewish cocky fashion and immediately made the grave error of losing his temper and antagonising the Committee. Sir Frederick Willis, who is the Chairman, asked a lot of very pertinent questions to all of which he had either to say "I do not know" or tried to evade or worm out by countering with another question. This went on for a time until Sir Frederick himself lost his temper and told him that he, Coplans, was there to answer questions before the Committee "yes or no" and not generalise and parry with questions to the Committee.

His reports given to the "Daily Mail" were gone into question by question around the table by each one of the Committee. He was asked first, why he did not examine the garage mechanics in question before the test and why he did not use control mechanics. He tried to evade these questions saying he did not think it was necessary due to the evidence in the literature. Sir Charles Martin asked him directly if he as a scientist thought for one minute that by standing for an hour in Piccadilly Circus that he would get lead poisoning from the exhaust of automobiles. His answer was "very short people with their noses close to the ground might run a risk over a period of time of getting lead poisoning" (Can you beat it for an answer?). He was asked again if from a scientific viewpoint he thought that the lead which he found on the overalls of the workers should necessitate special laundering conditions. His answer was that he thought that probably this would be a better precaution. The Committee and Sir Charles Martin told him flatly that they did not agree with him.

He was asked by various members of the Committee if he had done any personal experimentation either on animals, men, or in fact any individual research on lead poisoning, possible hazards from automobiles using Ethyl Petrol and so forth. He said that he had not. He was asked by another Committee man if he had had any experience with heavy metal poisons or lead poisoning. He said "no, except with the experience my medical profession has given me". He was asked by another concerning his foolish statement of pollution of wells with Ethyl Petrol.

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He hedged and said probably if the patrol was taken into them. Doctor Chaston Chapman looked at him in utmost disgust and said "how about if someone poured some sheep dip into a well" much to the amusement of all hands.

Coplans' total evidence - if you could call it evidence - was really not evidence at all but consisted of reading fragments from Flynn's report. He delivered a very eloquent oration that it was not so much the males he was worrying about with Ethyl Petrol but the poor women and children and that it was conclusively proved by Professor Flynn that when he put Ethyl Petrol on a goat said goat aborted, therefore, the goat being a female and behaving thus it was quite evident that human females might behave thus. This caused big laugh by the Committee. He next proceeded to read one of the beautiful eulogies of Dr. Alice Hamilton which had nothing to do with the situation. Being stumped at this point and seemingly not knowing what to do he pulled out a voluminous stack of papers and read aloud a clipping from some medical journal in New York which stated according to his interpretation that the Standard Oil had had to pay \$300,000. damages for workers in Ethyl Petrol and that suits of \$1,000,000. additional were pending. When Sir Frederick Willis asked him distinctly if he did not know that this was due to the accident at Bayway with workers in the manufacture of T.E.L. said Coplans hedged very nicely and said that he did not know that, from the wording of the article he had presumed it had something to do with Ethyl Petrol.

His co-worker Rowell, who carried out the engine tests and stripped the engines, was evidently so disgusted with Coplans that when he, Rowell, got on the stand he made a fine testimonial on our behalf. When asked by one of the Committee men if he thought the presence of lead in the faeces of one of the mechanics was dangerous he said he did not and volunteered the further information that when they found that this mechanic had lead in his faeces he was sent to a specialist and the specialist was asked if in his opinion this trace of lead was in any way injurious to the man. The specialist said it was not and probably it was derived from handling solder which this man had been doing quite a bit in the engine laboratory. Rowell, when asked by another Committee man if he attached any significance to the finding of lead dust on the overalls of mechanics, said he most certainly did not. He then volunteered some information which almost knocked Professor Coplans cold - that in the normal course of events mechanics in his laboratory were forced to put on clean overalls once a week but that when they began the Ethyl Tests he was ordered that they were to wear the same overalls for the whole period of the tests which run over several months and that the overalls were in a very dirty condition at the end of the tests.

This morning the papers came out, I am sorry to say, with reports which would lead the unsuspecting laymen to think that Coplans was the wisest man in England - of course, we had expected it in the "Mail". This, of course, worries the Anglo and does not help the least bit in bolstering up their sales. However, as I see it, having had a long talk with Mr. Powell and Mr. Hamilton this morning, there is nothing that we can do which would be politic until the Committee brings out their report. Frankly it has been one hell of a job and which, believe me, I will be thankful when it is over - to get the Anglo personnel from bursting out into print almost any time daily with statements which might put them in a bad fix

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with the Committee. Of course, we appreciate their position as they are not only on trial with respect to sales but with respect to 40 years standing with the public and to have all of these ridiculous statements coming from Coplans and to be twisted around in the press is not conducive of ease of mind.

Sincerely,

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