

July 9, 1930

Mr. A. E. Mittnacht,
Ethyl Gasoline Corp.,
135 E. 42nd Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Mittnacht:

A little while ago our attention was called to a case of alleged lead poisoning in Winnipeg, by Mr. Fitzgerald. I am sending Mr. Fitzgerald a copy of this letter to you covering the examinations which Dr. Machle made at my request some days ago.

Dr. Machle examined three men, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], all employees in Ward's Garage in Winnipeg. All three men had had infections of the hands of the type which are not uncommon in garage workers and in the case of other men who have frequent abrasions of their hands. The skin lesions were all infectious and there was no suggestion of any part played by lead in their illness. A quotation from Dr. Machle's report states, "Lead intoxication was not considered at any time to be a factor in causing the illnesses of these men. The lesions were obviously of infectious nature. The question raised was whether or not Ethyl Gasoline or the deposits left from its evaporation, would be more likely to render tissues more susceptible to bacterial invasions than would contact with untreated gasoline. No evidence in support of this was exhibited by either their histories or the types of lesions shown." Considering the rather poor hygienic conditions of this garage, especially the rather bad washing facilities, and in view of the similar character of their injury, it would seem that they are the result of contagion.

Dr. Machle had a conversation with the physicians involved. These men did not seem to feel that there was any evidence whatever of lead poisoning or lead injury. I think, therefore, we may regard this as a closed matter.

It is reasonably certain that cases of this sort will arise from time to time, and that they are likely to cause a certain amount of local flurry. I do not believe that the efforts of my assistants, or Ethyl Gasoline employees, or employees of the oil company are likely to be of any considerable advantage in combatting impressions that arise in this fashion. It is my opinion that the best way to deal with them is to settle the case without arguing and let it pass for what it is worth.

Very truly yours,

RAK:EJ