

January 17, 1944

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Mr. Charles E. Baxter,
Coldbrook Post Office,
Saint John, N. B.,
Canada.

Dear Mr. Baxter:

I regret very much that I have had no opportunity to reply to your second letter, since I have been out of the country since the first of October.

I shall have to say that in my opinion there is no reasonable or probable relationship between exposure to gasoline fumes and the development of a heart condition or high blood pressure in a workman. Generally speaking, exposure to gasoline, while dangerous at the time, results in no permanent damage. One usually recovers completely within a few days even after exposure almost to the point of unconsciousness, and in my experience, repeated exposures of this type do not result in physical injury to any very considerable degree. I know of no instance in which any man has suffered any damage to his heart, blood vessels, or kidneys as a consequence of exposure to gasoline. I am afraid that anyone who told you that washing your hands in gasoline would damage your kidneys, was either "stringing" you or else he knew very little of what he was talking about. In any case, it is not wise to consider very seriously the things that laymen say about medical matters and diseases.

You may be quite right in believing that men who handle gasoline are not given enough warning of the dangers of handling it. This is particularly true of men who handle it a great deal. Most of such men come to feel that gasoline is harmless, and they tend to forget that in an enclosed place, high concentration of vapors can produce unconsciousness and death. Undoubtedly the reason for this is that drunkenness and intoxication resulting from the inhalation of gasoline, passes off without much injury, just as it does in the case of alcohol.

I believe this answers your questions as well as I can. However, it is a little difficult for me to give you any advice without

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knowing much more than I do about your general physical condition. If you have been consulting a doctor, and if you would like to have me write to him about you, I should be pleased to give him any information of which I am in possession.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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