

January 10, 1958

*W. H. Ball Corporation 1/17/58  
H. N. Ball / filed under AK-33X*

Mr. A. B. Wyrick  
Ethyl Corporation  
1141 Huntley Drive  
Los Angeles 26, California

Dear Wyrick:

Some time before Christmas I received an invoice through New York made out to Ethyl Corporation, Attention: Mr. A. B. Wyrick, for medical services rendered by Edwards Civilian Medical Center, of Edwards, California, to employees of Curtiss-Wright who were "exposed to fuel additive compound containing manganese." I approved the bill for payment, although it was fairly high, since I thought it inadvisable to create an uncomfortable issue with Curtiss-Wright or with these physicians who, certainly, are not at fault, and who rendered their services apparently in good faith. This is, nevertheless a wholly unsatisfactory situation, from my present viewpoint, and it needs to be put straight. I have written to Dr. Doty about it, and you can expect him to get in touch with you about it. When you and he and Hume Chenault, who presumably is concerned, have established the facts and reported them to me, we shall be able to determine what should be done. Certainly the present situation is quite unsatisfactory to me. These physicians at Edwards cannot possibly know what they are about, and I have no idea what they have been told or who is responsible for their activity.

It is best, I think, for me to state the case, so far as I am responsible for any action in this direction. Some weeks ago I talked to Dr. Frank Degrace of Woodridge, New Jersey, Medical Director of Curtiss-Wright, about the medical supervision of the people who handle Ak-33X. I had been assured by Mr. Ball that Ethyl would provide the necessary indoctrination of the Curtiss-Wright people in the procedures of mixing this material with gasoline (or in any other ways of handling it), and that continuing supervision of the handling operations would be so provided, with the cooperation of Curtiss-Wright supervisory personnel. In my opinion, the men who were to do this work should have the same type of medical supervision that is provided for persons who handle tetraethyl lead, but I hesitated to impose this upon Curtiss-Wright, or to intrude into their medical activities, without their full understanding and approval. Accordingly I telephoned Dr. Degrace and raised

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the question whether he and his associates wished to do this or whether they wished us to attend to this. I gathered, without having a flat statement, and without being clear as to just what they would do and how they would do it, that he considered this to be their own problem. This is where I left it, and therefore you can picture my irritation when this bill for outside medical services was presented. If we were to look after these people, we would do it ourselves, and not turn it over to some ill-informed physician or physicians. On the other hand, if Curtiss-Wright engage this medical group to look after their employees, I would expect them to pay the bill themselves.

I hesitate to call Dr. Degrace again, for I am not acquainted with him - in fact, I never heard of him - and I have no idea of his authority, ability or professional understanding of this kind of situation. If he has any responsibility for this, it is apparent that he has misunderstood me once, and he is likely to do so again. I regret now that my wish to maintain the professional amenities got me into this. It would have been better had we taken on the job ourselves, and followed through on it in the usual manner. In any case, I want to know what the Curtiss-Wright people are doing there, how this came about, who is responsible, medically, in their organization in your area, and how this can be straightened out. I shall appreciate your best efforts to establish the facts with Earl Doty and Hume Chenault and to pass them on to me for appropriate action.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK ef

C.C.: Mr. H. K. Ball  
Dr. K. V. Kitzmiller

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