

*Mr. James E. Boudreau
Ethyl Corp. Air Poll*

ETHYL CORPORATION

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO Dr. Robert A. Kehoe ADDRESS Cincinnati
FROM James C. Malone ADDRESS New York
SUBJECT DATE June 28, 1956

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

While Jim Boudreau is on his western trip I am sending direct word to you here about something going on in Los Angeles, concerning smog, that may be of background interest to you should you not have heard of it. The extent to which it is important I think will become clear only in a few weeks' time.

As a result of testimony before a House Small Business subcommittee, headed by Representative James Roosevelt, last month, the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County has undertaken a new inquiry into whether or not smog is lethal. The testimony, which was conflicting, was given by Dr. Clarence Mills, Dr. Francis M. Pottenger, and Dr. Paul Kotin of the University of Southern California.

According to prior announcement, the subcommittee set up hearings to find out the effects of smog on agriculture and other forms of business in the Los Angeles area, with a view to determining whether federal aid on the problem should be stepped up. The hearings were held in Los Angeles on May 18 and 19.

Just what the origin or order of the testimony in question was I do not know, but Dr. Mills was quoted as saying, "As of 1954 figures, there are 350 cardiac and respiratory deaths a year in Los Angeles either directly or indirectly attributable to smog." He spoke of cumulative effects. He also criticized the county's standards of air contamination used in sounding alerts. Representative Roosevelt called his data "rather startling and frightening."

Dr. Pottenger asserted at the hearings that the Los Angeles County Medical Association is agreed that "air pollution can cause death," and that some doctors have listed smog on death certificates as a factor in the deaths. He added, "I am seeing in private practice more cases of lung cancer than ever before."

In contrast, Dr. Kotin said, according to the Los Angeles Examiner, "Living in Los Angeles carries no greater likelihood of death than living in New York, Chicago or any other American city. Panic (because of smog here) is very definitely not the order of the

June 28, 1956

day." He denied there was information available to prove that smog shortened life spans. Asked, "Would you say Dr. Mills' figure is exaggerated?" he answered, "I won't say it is right or wrong; I just say I don't believe it."

Soon afterward at a meeting of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors this testimony was discussed and Supervisor Kenneth Hahn proposed an inquiry to clear up the relationship of smog and death ("these rumors and half-truths") once and for all. The Board directed its "smog chairman," Roger W. Jessup, to get a transcript of Dr. Mills' statements at the hearing, and to confer with the Los Angeles County Medical Association and the U. S. Public Health Service. Whether the inquiry will go beyond these sources has not been indicated.

Incidentally, Supervisor Jessup is involved in a race for retention of his position in November's general elections. Early this month in the primary elections he lost heavily to candidate Warren Dorn, mayor of Pasadena. The main issue between the two was smog, with Jessup, a veteran of 24 years as a Supervisor, being accused by Dorn of delay and repression of facts. Each has much campaigning to do yet. Jessup has been the Supervisor most involved with the doings of the county's Air Pollution Control District (APCD), which reports to the Board.

A day or two after the Supervisors met, Dr. Edward C. Rosenow, president of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, wrote Supervisor Hahn. He said, "The Board's decision to establish a program to evaluate medical opinion relative to the possible harmful effects of smog...has the concurrence of the Medical Association."

"The Association promises full cooperation in this new endeavor...through Dr. Francis M. Pottenger, Jr., head of the Association's smog committee, and the 6,700 physicians of the Association."

Dr. Pottenger has been reported as saying since the Roosevelt hearing that the smog committee of the Medical Association disclosed a year and a half ago that air pollution can cause death, and that the present standards of pollutants in the air and the alert system do not safeguard public health.

County Administrator Arthur J. Will, who reports to the Supervisors, has been quoted as saying in connection with the Board's inquiry that, "The organization which has done the most work in smog is the U. S. Public Health Service."

"They've flatly said, they have found no evidence that smog has even contributed to the death of anyone here."

We expect to find out how the inquiry is progressing, and whether lead has been or might be brought into it, from the Western Oil and Gas Association. Should you wish it, I shall try to learn something

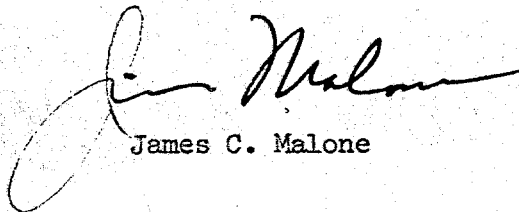
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Dr. Robert A. Kehoe--3

June 28, 1956

further also, from WOGA, about the Los Angeles County Medical Association's report of a year and a half ago, referred to by Dr. Pottenger. I know you may have seen this.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim Malone", with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the signature.

James C. Malone

JCM:tp

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