

February 12, 1929

Mr. Josiah Stryker, Attorney at Law,
c/o Lindabury, Depue and Faulks,
Prudential Bldg.,
736 Broad St.,
Newark, N. J.

Dear Mr. Stryker:

I have gone over the material which you sent me the latter part of January on the subject of the claims of Rettino, Florio and Jenkins. I am very slow in answering you because of the pressure of work at the end of a semester of school work.

I cannot see how any of these men could have been poisoned by the work described. It does not seem that even act of gross carelessness could have caused such a result. The only plausible background for injury would appear to be connected with their former employment in the tetraethyl lead manufacturing plant. If that be disregarded in their claims then their claims seem to me to be quite empty, unless I fail to understand the exposure as described.

The following facts, which can be supported by proper experimental evidence, are cogent in these instances.

1. We have not found evidence of the absorption of lead out of Ethyl Gasoline in any concentration of tetraethyl lead in gasoline less than 1 part in 1000. Experimental animals treated with Ethyl Gasoline have failed to accumulate lead in their tissues even after months of such treatment.

Furthermore a large number of men who have handled Ethyl Gasoline for a period of years, have not only failed to yield a case of lead poisoning, but also fail to show evidences of lead storage in their bodies.

It seems quite plain therefore that the contact of these men with gasoline can be dismissed as of no importance.

2. The vapor of Ethyl Gasoline, arising from tanks and other containers does not contain tetraethyl lead except in the most infinitely minute (theoretical) amount. Lead cannot be detected in the first five to ten percent distilled or evaporated over. Therefore except when the gasoline is spilled around and completely or for the most part evaporated, there is no exposure to the vapors of tetraethyl lead.

3. During the last several years I have had a large experience with persons who have been exposed to variable small quantities of ETHYL fluid. Several hundred men have been operating mixing systems which are like the one at Bayway. In fact several, identical with the original one there are still in use. No cases of poisoning have developed in the course of this work. We have followed these men carefully, having examined their blood in all cases, and having analyzed their excreta at intervals in the case of a considerable number. The exposure of these men, which is just like that described by the claimants, has continued regularly over a period of years, without injury. Furthermore I have followed a group of cases at the DuPont manufacturing plant and I have similar data on these men.
4. In the matter of the shafting, handled by the claimants, it can be shown that no tetraethyl lead could have remained undecomposed. There was no possibility of absorption through the skin, therefore. The washing undoubtedly removed soluble materials, so that there could hardly have been any appreciable amount of lead to crumble off in the form of dust when the shaft was being handled.

On the basis of the above facts I cannot see any way in which poisoning could occur under the conditions described except as the result of a prolonged and regular exposure. It appears to me from the history of these men that their exposure was brief and irregular.

I shall be furnished with the data necessary to substantiate the statements made above.

It will be very inconvenient for me to be away from the laboratory in the early part of the week for I have classes on Monday and Wednesday. It will also be difficult to be away during this month, also. I will appreciate any postponing of the date that can be obtained, therefore, and I will especially appreciate anything that can be done to allow me to be here during the first half of the week.

Very truly yours,

RAK:EJ