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Director

October 14, 1949

Dr. R. Emmet Kelley, M. D.
Medical Director
Monsanto Chemical Company
St. Louis 4, Missouri

Dear Dr. Kelley:

Thank you very much for your letter of October 7 relative to this Bureau's participation in the problem at your Nitro plant. From your letter it appears that there has been some misunderstanding about our purpose in wanting additional laboratory tests made, and I will try to explain as clearly as possible what we have in mind.

As you are aware, since the initial explosion of March 8 which contaminated the various buildings there have been a number of cases diagnosed as "chloracne", which have developed as a result of the explosion either from contaminated equipment or from the offending material being in the air. Repeated attempts have been made to clean the building and equipment but new cases continued to develop up to a few weeks ago, with one very recent case developing as a result of contact of an employee with transite roofing on the building which was apparently impregnated with the offending material. We have made repeated attempts in our laboratory to identify the material in question, but with no success and Mr. Durland advises that your research laboratory has likewise been unable to identify or finger print the material.

Our principal concern at this time is not to identify the material for the sake of identification but to arrive at some means of determining whether or not the building or its various parts has been sufficiently decontaminated in order that we can justifiably say that an employee can work in the buildings without being further exposed. Since our chemical methods have failed up to this time, it appeared to us that the logical step would be to take scrapings from the walls, ledges, etc. of various areas in the plant and use these for animal experimentation to determine whether or not any of the material remaining could cause this particular type of acne. We had in mind the testing of these various materials along with some of the pure reaction products on rabbit ears to ascertain whether or not the acne producing properties still remained.

Being acquainted with Dr. Smyth and with some of the work he has done along this line, I thought perhaps such work could be done by his group. However, if Dr. Kehoe's group is in a position to do similar studies, we certainly would be quite agreeable to their doing the work in place of Dr. Smyth.


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The work involved, as I understand, would if done by the Mellon Laboratory cost approximately \$50.00 per sample and I can visualize approximately 6 or 8 samples. Dr. Smyth advises that due to their industrial affiliations, the work would be done only provided your Company would request such work to be done, and that he would also have to clear such work with their New York office. Whether or not it could be arranged for the State to defray the expense of carrying out these tests would depend upon Dr. Smyth obtaining permission to accept money from a State agency and, of course, upon our ability to obtain the necessary funds.

We would appreciate very much your contacting Dr. Kshoe to ascertain whether or not his group is in position to do such work, although I am not aware of any published work of this type being done by Kettering Laboratory. In any event we would appreciate your further thoughts on this matter and assistance in helping us assure the employees that their working places have been rendered free of harmful acne producing materials.

Very truly yours,

STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Bureau of Industrial Hygiene

By _____
Paul D. Halley,
Acting Director
Industrial Hygienist

PDE/jc