

Dr. H. N. Russell
Alexandria - Egypt

June 15, 1938

Dr. E. N. Russell
1 Rue Toussoun
Alexandria, Egypt

Dear Doctor Russell:-

I have just received word from Mr. F. M. S. Tegner of Ethyl Export Corporation that you are willing to undertake the medical supervision of workmen who are soon to be engaged in mixing Ethyl Fluid with gasoline for the Vacuum Oil Company in Alexandria. Accordingly I am sending you herewith a small pamphlet which outlines the general policies which we have attempted to carry out and which give some brief statement of certain of the problems which are to be met. I consider it very unlikely that you will have any difficulties in connection with this work since we have found that if the equipment is satisfactory, and if it is operated properly, no illness or injury of any kind occurs. On the other hand, I can not stress too much the importance in my mind of having our medical representatives check the equipment and the manner of its use from time to time to see that carelessness does not creep into this apparently safe operation. The Fluid is a definitely poisonous material and if it is handled carelessly, serious cases of poisoning will develop. The gasoline, on the other hand, has demonstrated its entirely safe properties from the point of view of lead, and it is my opinion that the gasoline treated with lead in proper concentrations is no more dangerous to handle than is ordinary gasoline. We have attempted to prevent all lead poisoning in connection with mixing operations by keeping a sharp lookout for signs of lead absorption in the mixing personnel and also, as I have indicated previously, by making a critical survey of the mixing equipment and its means of operation from time to time. Our supervision of the workmen has consisted of periodic careful physical examinations, plus microscopic examination of blood smears regularly. In this country we have also made it a point to study the lead excretion of workmen from time to time so as to be certain of the magnitude of the lead exposure. We know how that if the mixing equipment is operated in accordance with the instructions, no measureable lead absorption occurs. Moreover no cases of lead poisoning have been seen in connection with this work over the entire period of years in which the present type of medical and mechanical regime has been in operation.

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In connection with the use of leaded gasoline, there may be some apprehension on the part of people in your vicinity and there may be complaints of various kinds. Despite the negative character of our findings up to the present, we have made it a point to investigate these complaints with all care, and I suggest that it would be advantageous if you were to do likewise. I think you will have very little difficulty from this source, but if difficulties of any kind do arise, I should appreciate it very much if you would communicate with me concerning them so that I will be informed as to what is occurring.

In view of the problems which have been associated with this industry, and in view of the extensive experimental work which has been done in evaluating these problems, there are a considerable number of published articles which deal with various phases of the subject. I shall send you copies of such of these articles as are now available for your information, and as soon as I am able to obtain it, I shall send you a copy of a volume in which we have assembled all of the articles which bear upon this subject. Unfortunately the number of such volumes was limited and their supply is now substantially exhausted so that it may be some time before I shall be able to carry out this promise. Meanwhile the articles which I am sending you will probably be of some interest and service to you.

Sincerely yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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