

C O P Y

Publicity Bureau

DUPONT

SPECIAL NEWS LETTER

Wilmington, Del., November 10, 1924.

EDITORIAL NOTE -- The following data have been prepared to give the men and women of the duPont Organization complete and authoritative information pertaining to ethyl gas. The public excitement following a serious accident at the Bayway, N. J., laboratories of the Standard Oil Company, where tetra-ethyl-lead was being manufactured, has led to serious confusion. We are anxious that everybody in our organization shall know the facts and be able to discuss them intelligently with a view to allaying public excitement and correcting wrong impressions. It is suggested that this information be given serious study and that use be made of it by our men in their contact with the public.

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FACTS ABOUT ETHYL GAS

Attention is called to a statement issued by President Irene duPont under date of October 30th. This was published widely. It follows:

"Tetra-ethyl-lead, which the duPont Company is manufacturing on a commercial scale, and which is reported as the cause of the recent unfortunate accident at the Bayway plant of the Standard Oil Company, should not be confused with ethyl gas, an improved motor fuel, which contains less than one-tenth part of 1 per cent of tetra-ethyl-lead.

"Tetra-ethyl-lead is poisonous, and its manufacture involves risks, but no more so than many chemicals manufactured and used in enormously greater amounts.

"The du Pont Company during the experimental period, and during the inception of manufacturing, experienced much trouble with men becoming poisoned to various degrees of seriousness, and even to the extent of fatalities. During the past year of production, when more than one hundred men have been employed continuously, the difficulty has diminished steadily. In the past several months, under full production, only slight difficulties have been encountered. Experience has taught the necessary precaution, both in plant and medical care.

"We find that workmen cumulatively poisoned by this material invariably indicate it in the incipient stages before any harm is done by marked symptoms."

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"The last part of the above outlined problems, namely the possible hazard due to the exhaust gases from automobiles using ethyl gasoline as ordinarily sold has been carried on for more than ten months.

"The plan of investigation was that of exposing various types of animals (pigs, guinea pigs, rabbits, dogs and monkeys, over 100 in all), to a definite concentration of exhaust gas from an engine using ethyl gasoline.

"THE INVESTIGATION CARRIED OUT INDICATES THE DANGER OF SUFFICIENT LEAD ACCUMULATION IN THE STREETS THROUGH THE DISCHARGING OF SCALE FROM AUTOMOBILE MOTORS TO BE SEEMINGLY REMOTE.

"The investigation of the possible hazards of poisoning from exhaust gases is being continued at the Pitt County Bureau of Mines, together with the first two phases

Reports show that during the last year about 10,000 ethyl gasoline stations have been established throughout the country and there is no record from any of these stations of any employee handling this gas being harmed in any way by it.

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This statement was followed two days later by the publication of a report by the United States Bureau of Mines which had been conducting investigations on Tetraethyl Lead. The following is quoted from this report:-

Problems Relating to Health.

"The problems of the health hazard due to the use of tetraethyl lead may be divided into three parts:

"1. The hazard in the manufacturing and handling of the concentrated tetraethyl lead. This hazard occurs in the manufacturing plant.

"2. The possible hazard in handling the ethyl gasoline (one part of tetraethyl lead to one thousand parts of gasoline). This possible hazard may affect those handling ethyl gasoline.

"3. The possible hazard due to the exhaust gases from automobiles using ethyl gasoline. This possible hazard concerns the entire public.

"The scope of the work undertaken by the Bureau of Mines included an investigation of all possible hazards as outlined above. The first two parts, namely that of the danger in the manufacture and handling of the concentrated tetraethyl lead risk in handling the ethyl gasoline as sold to the auto driver, are now being investigated. Sufficient data has not been obtained to draw conclusions to date. As soon as this investigation has been completed the results will be made public.

These facts, together with the official statement from the Bureau of Mines that the exhaust is not dangerous, show that ETHYL GAS IS NOT A MENACE TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE CONCENTRATED TETRA-ETHYL-LEAD.

The Manufacturing of tetra-ethyl-lead admittedly is not without danger, but the experience of the manufacturers and the investigations so far made into the accident at Bayway indicate that poisoning occurs only when something out of the ordinary occurs, such as a spill, leak in the apparatus, or a disregard of cautions.

The duPont Company has been experimenting with and manufacturing tetra-ethyl-lead at its Deepwater Plant for nearly two years. During that time there have been three fatalities, due in each case to handling apparatus which was wet with the material.

The difficulties encountered in the manufacture of this product have steadily lessened as experience has shown ways to eliminate dangers and as the men and their supervisors have learned care in the handling of the materials.

The tetra-ethyl-lead plant has been running at virtually full capacity for the past three months, without those engaged in the manufacture of tetra-ethyl-lead encountering any trouble.

At the duPont Plants, doctors are constantly on duty. Workers are examined frequently and the least sign of illness in this or any other chemical operation brings immediate medical treatment and such other attention as the particular case may suggest.

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