

SAFETY DEPARTMENT

August 8, 1945

Mr. H. Fossett
The Associated Ethyl Company Limited
Artillery House, Artillery Row
London, S.W. 1, England

Dear Hugh:

I have read with interest your letter dated July 17th, together with the attached correspondence to and from Mr. J. E. Batchelor of Australia. We have a sufficient number of copies of Dr. Machle's report on hand. One each is being sent to Batchelor and Kisso-Gill and two under separate cover to yourself.

So far as we know it is not a general practice in this country to maintain a variable water bottom as a means of keeping down evaporation losses in a tank with a fixed roof. Water bottoms are used primarily to prevent the loss of gasoline as a result of tank leakage. It has been observed in certain cases where the water bottom has been changed frequently that considerable sludge collects in the tank. In one case, in a tank that had not been cleaned for a number of years, the depth of sludge varied from 12" to 18". Much of the sludge consisted of mud and silt from the source of water supply. While the lead content of the sludge may be low, it is doubtful if the total lead content was materially reduced.

It would seem logical that some lead would be carried off with the water if the water bottom were changed with any degree of regularity. In the case that came to Batchelor's attention, he mentioned that there was but a trace of lead in the sludge. If he has a more accurate figure, we should like to have it and we should also like more information with regard to the amount of water held in the tank and the frequency with which it was changed.

Certainly the phenomena is of interest but whether it goes beyond the point of academic interest, thereby affecting our tank cleaning precautions, seems questionable. If Batchelor is correct in his assumption and the oil companies were encouraged to change the water in floating roof tanks at frequent intervals as a means of reducing the lead

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content of sludge, probably the companies would then infer that the lead hazard would be reduced to such a point that our tank cleaning precautions would no longer be required. We doubt if this ever would be true. Efforts expended in this direction might then paradoxically result in less assurance of safety in tank cleaning than now exists.

We shall be pleased to review from time to time any additional information you care to supply. An analysis of the additional data may change our opinion of the ultimate result of the procedure.

Very truly yours,



O. B. LEWIS
Manager

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