

January 16, 1940

Colonel Vollenweider
Oberfeldarzt, Bern
Switzerland

Dear Colonel Vollenweider:

I have received a communication from Mr. F. M. S. Tegner of the Associated Ethyl Company Ltd., giving me briefly the results of his conversation with you concerning the medical supervision of men who will be engaged by the Swiss Army to mix Ethyl Fluid with gasoline for aeronautical purposes. It is my purpose to supplement, so far as possible, the information which Mr. Tegner gave you concerning this work. If, at a subsequent date, you should wish to inform me as to the doctor who will be put in charge of these men, I should be glad to communicate with him and give him any further information which he might require.

I believe Mr. Tegner has supplied you with certain information concerning the occupational hazards of this work. I merely wish to say in addition that it has been our experience, after some considerable period of the operation of these mixing plants, that if the plants are kept in perfect order and if the men carry out the work in strict accordance with the regulations which have been issued, there will be no danger of their absorption of lead or of their developing any illness as a consequence thereof. It has been our purpose in designing the equipment and in developing the regulations to prevent completely all exposure. Accordingly the regulations are set up in such a way that they should be carried out in every detail. It is quite obvious that under military conditions, it may be difficult to carry out this regime. On the other hand it is quite certain that the greatest factor of safety lies in the attention to these details and following the instructions precisely.

There have been some difficulties from time to time as the result of the anxiety of workmen concerning the danger of handling gasoline. This problem, I believe, has been studied with such critical care that we can not state with certainty that there are no dangers of lead absorption in connection with the handling of gasoline containing lead in concentrations up to and including 4 cc per

American gallon. Some observations have also been made on gasoline containing 6 cc per American gallon, and here too we feel quite certain that there are no dangers either as the result of skin contact with the gasoline, or the inhalation of its vapors. Concentrations above this level may occasionally be used for aeronautical purposes but chiefly for experimental purposes. We do not recommend that such concentrations be used regularly, and we feel that even when they are used experimentally, they should be handled with considerable care. Accordingly we attempt to restrain enthusiastic persons who wish to employ these higher concentrations.

In conclusion may I say again that if any difficulties arise in your mind or in that of the physician you have chosen, I should be pleased to have him get in touch with me. Moreover, as soon as I can obtain translations of our articles into German, which were nearly completed at the outbreak of the war, I shall be glad to forward them to you or to the doctor whom you name in connection with this work.

Very truly yours,

PAK:is

cc Mr. Tegner

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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