

October 5, 1939

Mr. Lester B. Roberts
Casilla de Correo No. 1704
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dear Mr. Roberts:

I received through Mr. Champlin a copy of the decree issued by the Venezuelan government setting forth the conditions for the sale of gasoline treated with tetraethyl lead. I have also received a letter from Bevan, dated September 22nd, informing me that the Shell people planned to erect a blending plant at their San Lorenzo refinery, and that the Jersey Company also intends to get under way in the near future. With this situation facing us at once, I have written to Dr. Carlos Otolina whose address I give you herewith since I may not have transmitted it to you previously.

Dr. Carlos Otolina
Los Lecheros a Ponte Brion 220
Caracas, D. F.
Venezuela

Dr. Machle saw and talked with Dr. Otolina, who was recommended to us by Dr. Weiss, and we were given to understand that Dr. Otolina would be glad to take up this work when the circumstances rendered it advisable. I think we shall be able to handle the matter through him rather than through the physicians of the two companies. I have, therefore, written to him, asking him to confirm his acceptance of the appointment and letting him know that you would get in touch with him as soon as possible. I have no doubt you will be in Venezuela soon looking after these matters, and I suggest that you make contact with Dr. Otolina and complete the arrangements to your satisfaction.

In the above connection Bevan has called my attention to the fact that Dr. van Tienhoven is the chief medical consultant of the Shell people in Maracaibo, and that he would be in charge of the medical examinations for the Shell people. Bevan did not know that we have a medical consultant in Venezuela and, therefore, asked me to write Dr. van Tienhoven, giving him the necessary information and

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instructions. I am not doing that at this time since I think it will be simpler for you to explain to him and to his people that we have a medical consultant who will be in position to discuss with him, if he wishes, all of the matters which are concerned with this problem. I should appreciate it, therefore, if you would make it a point to see that Dr. van Tienhoven is informed of our arrangements. If then he wishes to write me for information, I shall be more than pleased to send him everything which we have.

Thanks very much for your information about Dr. Cruz Coke's presence in the United States. I called on him when I was in New York last week and had a very pleasant conversation with him, and have arranged that he visit us at the Laboratory as soon as it is convenient for him to do so. We will spend a day or two with him and will bring him up to date on the hygienic aspects of our work. I am glad indeed to have direct contact with him since it will be quite useful to have one or two well informed men in South America.

In the above connection Dr. Fouchier from the Talara refinery, who is in this country for a time, visited us and spent two or three days with us, going over the whole subject of the hazards of blending and the public health aspects of the distribution of leaded gasoline. Dr. Fouchier is an American, an intelligent and capable man, and he is now well informed whereas when he came to us, he had only the vaguest notion of the problem. It appears that in general the medical men in these plants are not consulted about the dangers of plant operation, but are merely supposed to see the workmen from time to time, to examine them and to pass on their illnesses without any special knowledge of the conditions under which they work. Presumably the information which we had made available was filed away in the office of the chief of the medical staff, and Dr. Fouchier, who was responsible for the examination of the men, had never seen any of the literature on the subject and consequently knew nothing of the nature of the hazards. He has promised, when he returns to Talara, to transmit his information to any man who may subsequently be in charge of the mixing personnel in a medical way. He has also said he would arrange for such communication between us and the doctor in charge as will enable us to know that any instructions which we sent out will actually be supplied. This, I believe, will be very helpful. I make mention of these matters because it seems to me that it may well be useful in your subsequent visits to refineries that operate under the supervision of their own medical staffs, for you to become acquainted with the doctors, and especially with the doctor who makes the examinations and who assumes the responsibility for the health of the workmen. Dr. Fouchier, for example, would have welcomed

a visit from you and a rather complete discussion of the technical and hygienic problems involved. I dare say other men in similar positions would also welcome it. In any case no harm would be done by some personal contact between the doctor and yourself.

It begins to look as though business would open up in South America and with this being the case, it behooves us to maintain as close contacts as possible with the medical people and with the problems which come to their attention. Published articles of the type I pointed out to you when you were here, will cause a great deal of difficulty if they are noticed, and it is particularly for this reason that I was quite anxious to have Dr. Cruz Coke visit us so as to be certain that he is quite familiar with the nature of the results of our investigations. He is a man of distinction and position and should be able to straighten out such things.

Please keep me informed of any other developments and also let me know when the new copies of the regulations are available. I would like twenty-five copies for my own use.

With kindest personal regards,

I am

Sincerely yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

P.S. Incidentally for your information our cable address is "KETLAB". RAK.