

June 18, 1964

Mr. Richard K. Scales
Ethyl Corporation
1600 West Eight Mile Road
Ferndale (20)
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Dick:

George Roush spoke to me some time ago about the possibility or advisability of my writing again to Dr. Clair Patterson. I did not do this, because I thought it was not graceful and so not wise to do so. I am no more convinced now that it is wise than I was then, although I am not prepared to take an arbitrary position on the matter. When, therefore, he directed my attention to your letter of June 15, to him, on this subject, I suggested that it might be just as well for me to write to you and consider, with you, what if anything should be done. If you disagree with what follows, I shall expect you to say so. We have known each other too long and too favorably, to be shy in speech.

First, let me say that an inquiry from me to Dr. Patterson, as to whether he received my letter and the bound volume of the Harben Lectures would be a transparent subterfuge. No one would be deceived by it. This is a satisfactory approach to a question which must be asked, but must be coated with ^{the} appropriate veneer of courtesy. That is not the case in this instance. If Dr. Patterson failed to reply because he was too busy, he will know that I am pointing the finger, though obliquely, at his bad manners. If he neglected deliberately to reply because he thought I was "grinding an axe," he will have the correctness of his judgment confirmed, and will persist in his belief that I should be ignored. This, I think, would be disadvantageous to me, and, even more, to Ethyl Corporation.

This brings me to the second point. While I do not advocate the acceptance, in silence, of a direct attack upon one's position (whether mine or that of Ethyl Corporation, in this instance), I do not think well of being defensive, when there is no need for it. Surely, at this point in time, my position and that of Ethyl Corporation, in the matter of the actual, present hygienic significance of lead from the exhausts of automobiles, being one and the same in fact, although different in their relationship (mine being one of professional reputation and integrity, Ethyl's being essentially a matter of commercial position), are better buttressed by both fact and professional prestige (having just been supported by the reputation of the U.S. Public Health Service, as well as that of the State Health Department of California and of Pennsylvania), than they have ever been before. There is nothing on the horizon, by way of informed and respected opposition, about which to be disturbed. Why should anyone in a responsible position in Ethyl Corporation be jumpy and defensive? Why should the Company appear to "protest too much," as though it had been afflicted with a guilty conscience? I am not advocating blindness or insensitivity to danger, but there is a posture which commands respect, and another which cultivates suspicion. I have never failed to give battle to those who have

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attacked me, if they were armed with anything better than pop guns, but I have never degraded myself by entering into a futile and undignified controversy with ignorant, uninformed or prejudiced persons. If this is a sound position for an informed individual (and I believe it is) it is equally sound for an industrial organization which has undertaken to face its problems fairly and squarely, to learn the facts, and to act upon them. There is such a thing as human dignity and there is also Corporate dignity. The latter is betrayed in our day by (some) blatant and cynical advertising, and by the intemperate speech of (some) public relations panderers, and newshawks. This betrayal shall not be permitted to extend into the realms of science and humane arts, as these are represented in valid technological and professional fields of society, including the industrial field.

I had not intended to sermonize, but I feel very strongly on these matters, and I fear that we (all of us) under the stresses of the times, tend to forget ancient truths and succumb to the current cynicism which holds that the end justifies the means. I think that this is never true, but that our increasing tendency to accept ^{as} unavoidable is the ultimate means of mixing truth with falsity so that they can no longer be differentiated.

Sincerely yours,

RAK:vr

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

cc - George Roush, Jr., M.D.

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