Two tanks were involved and the work was carried out by a contractor employing casual labour.

No gas masks were used by the men cleaning the first tank as the atmosphere was considered 'fresh'. This is of course strictly contrary to the regulations, but in extenuation it is reported that the tank was comparatively clean. The work was completed in six days.

Work on the second tank which was much dirtier than the other also took six days and, as the atmosphere was not considered 'fresh', gas masks of the double 'Bloman' type were supplied for the use of the men and the contractor was instructed to make uninterrupted use of the protective equipment provided.

Several times during the period the Job Officer supervising, found that the labourers were not using the full protective equipment as per his instructions and on each occasion it is stated the instructions and necessity for taking full precautionary measures were repeated with emphasis.

On the last day the contractor and four of his men complained of feeling unwell and were sent to hospital where, subsequently, three died.

A Committee of Enquiry has investigated the circumstances of the occurrence and, with a view to preventing a recurrence of this type of incident, the following recommendations were made :-

(1) A Technical Committee should investigate the procedure of handing over tanks and vessels for cleaning and maintenance, and formulate suitable regulations which would ensure the impossibility of misunderstandings and misinterpretation, together with such forms and permits as will enable the whole of the procedure to be covered in writing.

(2) Immediate arrangements should be made to form a regularly employed tank-cleaning gang with a supervisor capable of carrying out the responsibilities entailed. It is appreciated that tank cleaning would not fully occupy such a gang's time, but it is considered that the men could be found other work in the area when not employed on tanks, this being an advantage in that it would give the men spells in which to recover from any adverse affects of their normal work.

These recommendations are being put into immediate effect.

You will gather from the above that Abadan now fully appreciate the hazard involved in cleaning leaded spirit storage tanks, and I think it is most unlikely that there will be any further accidents from this cause.

Yours sincerely,

(SIGNED) C. A.HARRISON.