U K Govt agencies

IVNH/SS

3rd November, 1967

Mr. A. Richardson,
Shell Chemicals,
Tunstall Laboratory,
Sittingbourne,
Kent.

Dear Mr. Richardson,

I am glad to acknowledge receipt of your helpful letter of 2nd November concerning your experiments on the possible occurrence of polychlorinated biphenyls in marine birds and their eggs.

Now that it seems certain that contamination by chlorinated biphenyls is taking place we are keen to follow up and determine just how and where the contamination is taking place. You said over the telephone that you had evidence to suggest that the leakage occurs in the valley of the River Witham, and I am discretely following up this lead. However, before getting too deeply involved I feel I should enquire as to the nature of the evidence. Is it such as to constitute a very positive indictment, or does it suggest that the content is marginally greater in that area than elsewhere? This would clearly have an important bearing on the area of search. There is also the question of whether the material detected by Jensen has its origin in Scandinavia i.e. are there several sources of contamination to be located?

On the question of the possible toxic effects, we are as deeply concerned in this particular type of contamination as your Company is in insecticides, and as you say there is always the tendency for public bodies to exaggerate the hazard and for vocal members of the public to create alar. and despondency. Perhaps you could comment on the relative abundance of (a) insecticides (b) chlorinated biphenyls and give your view as to whether the content of (b) is contributing much to the hazard. Personally I believe that the overall hazard from these chlorinated materials has been grossly exaggerated, and that

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the remarkable sensitivity of the test methods has contributed in no small measure in causing alarm.

Yours sincerely,

D.V.N. HARDY

P.S.

Would you please note our trade name for polychlorinated biphenyls is AROCLOR.

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