

Baltimore, Md.
January 6, 1940

Mr. H. C. Does

Dear Claire:

While making a contact in one of the offices of the War Department in Washington yesterday, Major O. E. Counts, who is assistant executive officer of the Supply Division of the War Department, introduced himself and stated he would like to have a talk with me.

It developed that he has been in close touch with the development and manufacture of a new type of gasoline fired cooking stove which has recently been put in use by the U. S. Army. He showed me one of these stoves and it is different from most stoves, in that the products of combustion pass up around the pots or pans and it might be possible that this would have some effect on the food. He first asked about the approximate amount of lead, on the average, in "Q" gasoline and in Ethyl gasolines. He stated they might never have occasion to use Ethyl gasoline in these stoves but that they will use whatever motor gasoline is most available wherever the stove is in use. At present they have an asbestos filter which is supposed to filter out some of the lead and any other substance which might be objectionable.

Major Counts stated that the manufacturer who built one of the first of these stoves, which is an army design, seemed quite concerned as to the danger of food contamination from the leaded gasoline. He stated this manufacturer took this up with someone in our Company, after which it was decided to run some tests at the medical department research division of Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. On these tests they used "Q" gasoline and it was finally decided that the possibility of lead contamination of the food being cooked was negligible. Where they were able to find any trace of lead, it was no more than might normally be in the food. However, Major Counts plans to have similar tests run using Ethyl gasoline, so that they may know whether Ethyl gasoline may be used occasionally if necessary.

He is not at all concerned about this problem, and primarily wanted the information as to possible maximum lead content of Ethyl gasoline, which I advised him was three cc. per gallon.

It may be however that our Safety Department would like to investigate this matter further. These stoves are now being manufactured by Kirk and Blum, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

No commitment was made by me on this question, except to say that our Safety Department would no doubt cooperate with him if he wished further information.

Yours very truly,

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