

October 14, 1926.

Mr. E. W. Webb,
The Ethyl Gasoline Corporation,
25 Broadway,
New York, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Webb:

I thank you very much for your letter of October 7th concerning the organization of our medical work for the coming year. I, too, have given considerable thought to this matter; and, without at this time opposing your suggestions, I should like to give you my point of view as to just what we may expect to do in a medical way.

The supervision of our equipment throughout the field of distribution has so reduced the dangers of handling Ethyl Fluid, barring unforeseen accident, that I have come to the conclusion that we can gradually reduce the frequency of visits to all points which have installed what we feel at the present time to be an ideal set-up. Our problem at any one point is to make a first examination and proper selection of men for doing the work, and to so instruct these men as to give them an abiding impression of the necessity for care. When we have done this, and when we have installed the proper equipment, we have done away with the possibility of acute poisoning and the likelihood of chronic poisoning over a period of years. It may please you to know that I think that the dangers at any such point are exceedingly small, and that there is less likelihood of a development of even a chronic type of lead poisoning under these conditions, than is to be found in most of the lead industries. Under these conditions it will be necessary for us to call around frequent enough to see that the precautions which have been established are not relaxed. The medical examinations are important but become more in the nature of an experimental problem. For these reasons I feel that after we have once assured ourselves that things are as they should be, quarterly examinations will be sufficient, and I am inclined to believe that in the course of one years time examinations need not be made more frequently than twice yearly. You will see, therefore, that I am planning a diminishing amount of work for our Medical Department, and with this there will be a diminishing expenditure and time consumption in traveling, and more time for investigation and "trouble-shooting". I wonder if this picture will not alter somewhat your feeling as to the necessity for local medical representatives.

There are certain diplomatic questions in connection with working at refineries which it is well to consider. They may not be unsur-

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mountable difficulties but I present them for what they are worth. At most of the points where men are employed there is already a refinery physician, or a contract physician in the town who is called upon to take care of cases for the refinery. These men are frequently able men, sometimes they are not very able or very careful, in any case, however, the refinery management and these physicians have a distinct apprehension to calling in outside men. They have accepted our medical dictatorship so to speak in a very courteous and cooperative spirit, because, whether justly or not, they have a point of view that we are more or less experts and specialists in this line. The mere fact that we come from some distance tends to support this feeling of theirs. I question whether they will have the same feeling and will give the same cooperation to local men. It seems to me, therefore, that we should as far as possible make use of the refinery physicians, being tactful not to give them the impression that our Medical Staff is attempting to get out from under responsibilities, but is rather asking them for more assistance. I think that they will give this assistance freely, and that we can in proper places work with these men very satisfactorily.

Wherever a new point is opened up, I think that one of my assistants should make the initial inspection and examinations and should repeat his visits once or twice in order to make sure that everything is properly arranged and that the men are properly appreciative of the possible dangers of their work. After that I think we should put as much of the work in the hands of the refinery medical staff as seems advisable in the specific case, and that we should visit these points only as frequently as is necessary to make sure that they continue to maintain proper safeguards. Under these conditions even if the number of the points is doubled within a year we shall be able to take care of them without further addition to our Medical Staff, and at a diminished rather than an increased expense. In addition to this I shall be able with my present medical assistance to properly carry out the annual investigation, and to do it with fair rapidity. I should prefer doing the thing in this way rather than to have official representatives scattered around at different points in the country.

I appreciate that the present arrangement is expensive and time consuming, and in that connection I should like to ask whether it is your feeling that the medical expenses in salaries and traveling expenses exceed what you would consider a fair allotment for that work. In other words is the overhead expense attributable to medical work too high if it stays at its present figure. I ask this entirely for information because the present arrangement if it can be carried out gives an opportunity for experimental observation and for a rather high quality of industrial medical work which is quite unique and in which I am very proud to have a part.

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The above program which I have outlined has all of the appearance of being quite in opposition to the one which you suggested. I do not intent it in that way. I intend it to be rather the plan which has evolved in my mind going in the direction of the same thing which you have worked out in a different fashion. I present it not at all as an argument against your plan, but rather as the basis of a discussion which I should like to have with you when I am in New York next week. I am planning a trip to Washington on the 18th to discuss our investigation with Doctor Leake, and am expecting to be in New York the following day. I should appreciate very much the opportunity of discussing this entire matter with you and will consider the above when taken with your letter as a basis for discussion. I trust that you will be prepared to discuss with me the matter of what expenditures would seem to be advisable for medical work in order that we may work out together a program which will be properly limited in that respect, and will fulfill the needs of the situation.

With kindest regards.

Very truly yours,

RAK:OJ

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