

July 2, 1951

AIR MAIL

Mr. C. L. Risso-Gill
The Associated Ethyl Company Ltd.
Artillery House, Artillery Row
London, S.W.1
England

Dear Charlie:

Thanks for your letter of June 5, to which I have been slow in replying. However, I am leaving for a vacation for about a month, and it seems advisable to get an answer off to you without further delay. You may well imagine that I have been somewhat swamped in attempting to clear up many things before taking a trip.

With respect to the Du Pont "Tank Talk," I have not considered this to be a very significant piece of work. Perhaps I have a jaundiced eye toward such presentations of information. If so, I should be told and, therefore, I would appreciate any comments that you may make on the usefulness and applicability of this booklet. As you may well imagine, some of the people in Ethyl Corporation have felt that this was a clever and useful move on the part of Du Pont and that we should do something to counter it. To this I reply mentally - "nonsense," but that does not answer the problem.

With specific reference to your question, I may say that we do not, and never have, insisted upon the use of masks on the part of men who are handling sludge outside of the tank. The situation in this country is a little different from your own, as you know, since, generally speaking, we have a man on hand to decide whether the mask should be worn or not. If one is dealing with a particularly disadvantageous situation, the mask would be worn. Under ordinary circumstances they would not be worn by men working outside of the tank, unless the work was concentrated in such a way that they were more or less continuously exposed via the respiratory route. The fact of the matter is that the risks of handling sludge outside the tank, when reasonable precautions are taken to avoid exposure by inhalation, are rather insignificant, and would reach significance only if one was dealing with a group of men who were engaged in this work regularly as a part of their ordinary job. That is to say, cumulative lead poisoning could occur, but it is most unlikely that acute lead poisoning, as a consequence of a single experience lasting for a few days at a time, would result in difficulty. Our reason for the present version of your regulations in that regard, was that in the absence of supervision, it would not be possible to anticipate when serious danger might exist, and therefore it was wise to take these additional precautions. Certainly they are not regularly needed,

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Mr. C. L. Risso-Gill- (2) - July 2, 1951

and certainly experience in this country has demonstrated that they are not needed. On the other hand, the elimination of this regulation on your part, might result in your meeting a significant difficulty in some part of the world and thereby being subject to criticism for relaxing precautions which for some time have shown themselves to be satisfactory. If you feel that this is worthy of further discussion, because of practical situations, please do not hesitate to follow up. I am sure you would not be taking a serious risk in terms of numbers of difficulties. I am not sufficiently sure that there would be no difficulty to suggest that you might eliminate this regulation altogether. I shall be glad to consider it further with you on the basis of any information you may wish to present. At present, however, if you are having no difficulty in enforcing the thing, and if you are not creating a great inconvenience, I should be disposed to leave the matter as it is.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK ef

Dictated but not read.

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