

January 14, 1937

Mr. Alan C. Tully  
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation  
368 Collins Street  
Melbourne, C. 1  
Australia

Dear Mr. Tully:

In the matter of the request made by Mr. C. H. Newbold of the Vacuum Oil Company, I am not quite certain that I understand just what is desired. The second paragraph of your letter would seem to indicate that Mr. Newbold is concerned about the lead exposure of persons engaged in handling leaded gasoline. On the other hand, your third paragraph in which you refer to "the records which we keep on their employees" would seem to indicate that you are talking about men who have been engaged in mixing operations. I assume that in the matter of physical examinations Mr. Newbold is interested in having specific information as to the means by which one detects evidence of lead absorption. This, I think, is a matter which Dr. Fairley should discuss with Mr. Newbold in pointing out to him the requirements of an adequate physical examination in this regard. If then there are any specific questions which Mr. Newbold raises which Dr. Fairley does not wish to answer, he might refer the matter to me for consideration.

As to the records kept on men engaged in mixing, I have taken the position in this country that these records are not the property of the Corporation, but rather that they represent the tangible evidence of a confidential relationship between a workman and his doctor. To illustrate what I mean I should point out that the medical records of all men in this country and Canada are kept in this office and are distinctly private possessions. We never transmit a record in full to anyone. Rather we keep the records for our own information, transmitting such portion of them as in our judgment is proper if any question arises. It is my feeling that this should be the same in Australia since the relationship between patient and doctor is the same the world over, or should be. Dr. Fairley's records should be his own, and I see no reason for his transmitting to you or to anyone else copies of these records, or anything else which is in his judgment confidential between him and the man examined.

KE 0007013

Mr. Tully

On the other hand, we have not hesitated to transmit copies of the form of record which we use. The record merely indicates the type of information which is desired and which is required.

In conclusion I think it would be advisable either for Mr. Newbold or for Dr. Fairley after discussion with Mr. Newbold, to write to me fully about this situation, letting me know just what are the difficulties. If in Dr. Fairley's opinion the matter is not sufficiently important for further correspondence, it need not be carried any further. I might say in addition that there have been no difficulties of any kind <sup>here</sup> over the transfer of men from one position to another. It is quite generally recognized by the managements of American companies, and by medical people in general, that neither the mixing operations, as they are now carried out, nor the occupations involving contact with leaded gasoline and its vapors constitute a significant exposure to lead compounds. An occasional un-informed physician seeing a patient from the petroleum industry on whom he can not make an immediate diagnosis, may suggest the possibility that the illness in question is due to lead absorption. However, this is very rare and in our experience no such cases have given rise to serious difficulties, for the reason that in no instance has any such diagnosis been confirmed.

Very truly yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

KE 0007014