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C. H. NOBLE

Representing

THE ASSOCIATED ETHYL CO. LTD.

L O N D O N

Telephone MU 1965

368 COLLINS STREET

MELBOURNE C1

Our Ref 14/F

Your Ref ST/3/112

23rd July, 1947.

The Associated Ethyl Co. Ltd.,
Artillery House,
Artillery Row,
LONDON - S.W.1.

Dear Sirs,

On July 1st, I reported to you by cable, that two cases of T.E.L. poisoning had occurred, which were being treated by Dr. Blackburn in Sydney with satisfactory results at that time.

I had been hoping to send you a complete report on these cases before now, but we have only just received word from Dr. Blackburn that the two men concerned are now out of danger and are convalescing.

Full details are set out in the three attachments which are:-

- 1) Confidential letter from Mr. D. E. Baldwin, Chief Engineer, The Commonwealth Oil Refineries Ltd.
- 2) Report from Dr. Blackburn.
- 3) Letter from Dr. Keith Fairley.

As you will note from the letter from C.O.R., the Branch Engineer of that company, Mr. N. S. Panton, overlooked the fact that there may have been lead in the sludge contained in these two tanks.

It is possible that the men absorbed TEL from breathing gasoline vapour returning from the 44-gallon drum to which the vent pipes were connected. This, however, is unlikely as neither of the men complained of gasoline fumes, and furthermore, Mr. Panton had tested the tanks for the presence of gasoline vapours. It seems that the 'fumes' referred to by the men, were actually lead compounds volatilised from the sludge.

In the opinion of our medical consultants, the outstanding feature of these two cases is, that the treatment with dimercaptopropanol (British anti-Lewisite), appears to have saved the men's lives. This is the first occasion, as far as we know, on which BAL has been used in the treatment of TEL poisoning,

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and therefore its potentialities assume a very great importance in this regard in relation to our own business and that of Ethyl Corporation.

The Commonwealth Oil Refineries Ltd. have asked us to treat this whole matter confidentially, only disclosing to other concerns such information as is necessary for their own protection. So far, we have given this matter no publicity in any way, and insofar as other companies are concerned, all we propose to do, is to advise them that there have been two cases of TEL poisoning as the result of entering underground storage tanks which have previously contained lead treated aviation gasoline, and to draw their attention to the absolute necessity of observing the regulations which have been laid down. We know that several of these companies here are strongly opposed to any person entering an underground storage tank for any purpose whatsoever.

I feel that there is no need to comment any further on this accident at this stage, as no doubt your medical consultants will have a number of questions to put to Drs. Fairley and Blackburn by correspondence.

It is a very great relief to know that these men are now out of danger, and that they should be back at work within the next two or three weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Signed.....

(J.E.BATCHELOR)

Encls.

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