

# UNITED ETHYL COMPANY LIMITED

MEDICAL SERVICES  
ELLESMERE PORT, CHESHIRE

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DR. PHILIP BOYD  
*Chief Medical Officer*

OUR REF. MT/K.1.

YOUR REF.

August 19, 1955.

Dr. R.A. Kehoe,  
Kettering Laboratory of Applied Physiology,  
University of Cincinnati,  
College of Medicine,  
Eden Avenue,  
CINCINNATI 19,  
Ohio,  
U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Kehoe,

It is now some considerable time since I last interrupted your invariably full day with a letter from England, but I promised long ago at the beginning of the year to write to you to let you know how things were going, and as there is one particular subject I would like to mention, I thought the time was now appropriate.

First, however, I would like to wish you and Mrs. Kehoe a very pleasant summer vacation, as I feel sure you must either be planning this or already be on it by now, after the last semester. It seems a great pity to me that it was not this year that you could have taken the opportunity of coming over here, as I cannot remember such a fine summer as the one we are now having. It is both sunny and warm and dry, and altogether England has put on a very good face for once.

From this point of view, and from the point of view of seeing you both again, I would love to be able to suggest that it is necessary on our account for you to come over here. However, as things are going at the time of writing, I cannot honestly say that anything has occurred or is likely to occur in the near future to make me feel that we need to ask for your presence or beg your assistance in the United Kingdom. This does not mean that conditions here are ideal or even yet approaching this state, but they are controlled, and the management boys really seem aware of their problems, if not of all the solutions to them.

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The Medical Department is really settling down very well, and both Pat Barry and John Doran have now established themselves in a most capable way, so that I have the utmost confidence in handing over the running of the local medical and hygiene aspects of Ellesmere Port to them as from the end of this year.

I have therefore planned to move down to London for the New Year, and propose to establish myself at the London office for the purpose of administering the department and taking part in the senior management of the Company. I do not visualise that as time goes on my share <sup>in the latter</sup> will be such a very big one, although I would in no way like to abandon the very close association that I have as a doctor with the heart of our industry.

During the next few years, I hope to use the rest of my time by going back to learn in hospital and eventually take my Membership, the equivalent of your boards in internal medicine. After many discussions with other people, it has seemed to me that, while this is not an industrial medical examination of any kind, and is purely one of specialisation in internal medicine, nevertheless if I could possibly get it, such a qualification would be of great value to me both from the point of view of prestige as Chief Medical Officer of this Company, and what is more important from my own personal point of view, in that I shall feel more satisfied with a sounder and deeper clinical experience. While there is no immediate use from the Ethyl Company's point of view in such study, it has been obvious to me for some time that to be able to cope with the administrative side of the work with which I am presented, I would be better off in London, and here at Ellesmere Port I am not capable of being constantly available in such a way as to be useful in a proper fashion.

There is still a further point to consider in relation to this matter. The teaching of industrial medicine is in a rather sad way in this country, as you well know, and although I can in no way claim for myself to be qualified to help in this matter at the present time, I would be interested in the more remote future of taking a hand in the academic field. To do this, with authority, I would be in an excellent position with my Membership behind me.

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All this adds up to the fact that I propose to spend half of every day in the coming two years or so in hospital doing post-graduate clinical work, and perhaps take a D.I.H. course as well. I would much appreciate your comments on this plan.

My only immediate regret in this matter is the fact that I cannot see my way to returning to my studies at the Kettering for rather a long period of time, and of course the longer time goes by, the chances of this might in fact diminish, though I would hope that they would not. I believe you know well to what extent I have had difficulties in coming to a decision in all this matter. Not the least has been the fact that I have had to turn away from some of the real hopes I had with regard to the United States. However, amongst my many good fortunes is the fact that I am permitted as free a hand as I have now got in determining my future, has been of immense consolation to me, and in this respect I must say that Mr. Bevan has shown himself a deeply sensitive and generous person.

There should be plenty of opportunity over here for intelligent academic work in industrial medicine, even if the going is hard. In this respect I cannot help feeling that there is as yet far too little liaison with our American colleagues across the seas. In the years to come, I would like to be able to come over at fairly regular intervals, because I feel that our failure in this country to progress in the industrial medical field is largely due to the fact that we are separated from the bigger and more progressive aspects of this field in the United States, where more interest, money and time ~~are~~ devoted to this still fledgling science.

With regard to a specific problem, there is a point I would like to mention which relates directly to work in Cincinnati, and of which you warned me when you were last over here, that has recently re-appeared on the scene. This is the question of air pollution. An article appeared in a Dutch daily newspaper recently which was written in typical journalistic fashion, describing the work of some Swiss doctor, and generally alerting the public to the so-called appalling dangers of the exhausts of vehicles in European cities with particular regard to lead. The whole tenor of the article

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is such that it is easy enough to scorn it, but the fact remains that it may trigger off a series of attacks in the papers of this nature, and it has been sufficiently noticed to attract the attention of Caltex in New York. Caltex have written to Errol Gay, and Errol Gay has written to us, asking for my opinion of the article in question.

I am rather loth to go into print, when I know so well that the heart of the question in modern terms is being worked out in your own university, so I have suggested to our London office that they advise Errol Gay and, in his turn, to advise Caltex to approach you directly in this matter. If you do make any specific comments on the question of air pollution in regard to lead and other additives of gasoline, I would be most grateful to have a copy of whatever you say.

Fundamentally, I do not believe the situation has reached even near to that experimentally observed by the British scientists when they made their 1930 departmental report, and that therefore in terms of lead poisoning even the worst traffic conditions of any city to-day do not amount to anything greatly significant. I do not mean by this that I do not consider the exhaust problem a very real nuisance in any moderately-sized to large town. In fact, I am quite convinced that to walk down the streets of any ordinary English town to-day is really positive torture. Particularly blameworthy seem to me to be the Diesel fumes that are now belched out by traffic on the road. By the time I have walked from one end of Chester to the other, my eyes are red, I feel sick and slightly giddy, my head aches, and I may even be coughing, and I am sure that I am not in such bad training that this should be simply attributed to my physical state after gentle exercise!

I have no doubt you will be hearing from Caltex or Errol Gay in due course, and apologise if I have been the wilful disturber of your peace in this matter.

I should be grateful if you would give my kindest regards to Frank and my other very good friends in the laboratory. It really was an intense pleasure for me to return there this year, even for so short a time, and the Buffalo visit was a highlight of my trip across the Atlantic. For a while I felt as if I were back "where I belong," which is saying quite a great deal.

Please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Kehoe.

Yours sincerely,

*Philip*

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