Mr. O. [illegible] Lewis — New York

Mr. H. K. Ball — Tulsa

Continental Oil Company
Artesia, New Mexico

December 12, 1944

Dear Oscar:

As reported to you over the telephone Continental Oil Company at Artesia completed the cleaning of tank #15 on November 29, 1944. This is a refinery blending tank, 10,552 barrels in capacity. The tank was cleaned in order to put in a new bottom as the old one was leaking. Sometime within the past few days, date not yet known, the concrete bottom was poured in this tank. Four men were hospitalized as a result of this work. The Refinery Superintendent, Mr. E. E. Gillespie, advised our Mr. Lenington of the circumstances and we immediately got in touch with Dr. Kehoe who in turn discussed the situation with the local doctor at Artesia who was working on the case for the Continental Oil Company. We have been advised by Dr. Kehoe that Dr. Schradin will arrive in Amarillo Tuesday night December 12. Mr. Lenington will drive him to Artesia the following morning and they should arrive around noon on Wednesday December 13.

Mr. Lenington reported that the tank was not thoroughly cleaned from a lead standpoint and so advised the Refinery Superintendent. At one time the refiner was considering putting a steel bottom in the tank. Mr. Lenington told him that if this was to be done he was to be advised so as to be on hand for any hot work that might be carried out. Cliff is preparing a detailed report on the tank cleaning and all circumstances leading up to the time the men were exposed.

There have been several theories as to what might have developed at this tank. However, these are more or less a matter of conjecture at this time and we would rather not discuss them until further evidence is presented. A further report will be forthcoming.

Yours very truly,

H. K. BALL

HKB/hmr

cc: Dr. R. A. Kehoe
Mr. C. E. Lenington

KE 0021483