

March 3, 1953

Mr. M. P. Murdock
Ethyl Corporation
100 Park Avenue
New York City 17

Dear Mac:

A short time ago I received a letter from a professional acquaintance of mine who was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on a special mission for The Foreign Service of the U.S.A., with headquarters in the American Embassy. He reported to me, with some alarm, certain circumstances in relation to the distribution of leaded gasoline which he considered reprehensible and dangerous. In order to abbreviate this letter, I must tell you that I wrote to him promptly, pointing out that the dangers of the handling of leaded gasoline were not what he supposed them to be, and thereby calmed down the situation appreciably. I did say, however, that I would bring his information to the attention of the proper people. The things he reported to me are significant, as evidence that the conventional precautionary measures are not being taken by some of the petroleum distributing companies, in their operations in that country and they should be brought to the notice of the responsible persons in those companies, if any of them operate from the United States. On this latter score, I do not know the facts, but I am sure that you can establish them, if you do not already know them, and act accordingly.

The facts as reported are these. The pumps from which leaded gasoline is dispensed in Addis Ababa are not marked with the warning signs. (I have just prepared a memorandum on the significance of this matter and have forwarded it to Lou Shank in response to one of the suggestions made in the "Engineered Thinking" program. Reference to this memo will serve to show why I think this is an important matter.) In addition to gasoline dispensing from pumps, a great deal of leaded gasoline is distributed in small cans and in drums. I do not believe that we have ever insisted upon the use of warning signs (stickers) on such cans, but if they are used widely by a simple and untutored people, they should probably be marked with such a sticker. We have insisted that drums of gasoline, distributed into rural or primitive areas be so marked, and in general this has been done. In any case, it appears, but the information may not be exact, that no such effort is made by the distributors in Ethiopia. The distri-

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butors are said to be Shell and Caltex.

It is my feeling that this matter should be inquired into, if any of the responsibility for this resides in the U. S. companies. If not, the matter can be attended to by Associated Ethyl. I have brought the matter to their attention, since, because of the use of cans, I suspected that British companies were the responsible ones in this situation.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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