

July 2, 1951

AIR MAIL

Mr. H. Fossett
The Associated Ethyl Company Ltd.
Northwich Cheshire
England

Dear Hu:

I must confess to a tremendous tardiness in replying to your letter of April 26 concerning the use of respirators and breathing apparatus, generally, in the petroleum and allied industries.

The nature of your letter was such that it could not be answered readily and off-hand, except in the case of tetraethyl lead. For this reason, being rather pressed for time in recent months, I set it aside with the idea of giving you a considered answer at an appropriate time. It happens that this is my last day at the Laboratory for about a month, and I am distressed by my failure to reply, not as much as a matter of discourtesy as the poor response to a request for information. I can still not give you a considered answer to your question, but I shall present your letter to one or two of my associates for consideration, and in due course we shall probably have some of the answers.

With reference to tetraethyl lead, there is, I think, no question that the standards which we have applied in the industry are entirely satisfactory. Not only have tests of an experimental type, but those of experience, demonstrated that the use of the charcoal canister, certainly in the absence of high concentrations of gasoline vapor, is quite efficient in the elimination of tetraethyl lead in the atmosphere. I think, therefore, that anything that can be done to have this officially recognized in the petroleum industry, whether or not it is recognized by any official agency, is advantageous. So far as I can see there is only one disadvantage. We have advised against the use of canister masks in any situation in which a man is required to enter an enclosed space that may contain appreciable concentrations of other organic vapors. It might, therefore, give rise to some misconception, if the impression were given that canister masks are suitable for use under all circumstances in which there may be exposure to tetraethyl lead. This I do not take too seriously, since it is a condition that presents itself in connection with all canister masks. I have merely thought it well to mention it in connection with the problem of Associated Ethyl in the broad sense.

This is no proper answer to your letter, and I beg your indulgence. I shall undertake to give you a somewhat more complete answer later, despite the fact that it may be too late to do you any good in your more or less official deliberations.

Mr. H. Fossett - (2) - July 2, 1951

With kindest personal regards and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK ef

Dictated but not read.

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