

May 23, 1941

Mr. J. L. Stecker
E. I. duPont de Nemours and Co.
DuPont Building
Wilmington
Delaware

Dear Mr. Stecker:

When I was in New York Wednesday, I stopped in to see John Schaefer and inquired as to the progress of various items of work in connection with the manufacturing plants, more particularly the installation of the Rotoclones and the project for the new blending plant. I realize that this is a difficult time for construction work and for obtaining any special items of equipment. I also know that you and all of your people are very busy with a wide variety of things. On the other hand it occurs to me that Mr. Lawrence, who presumably would have to do or push the greater portion of this work, might not be looking at the matter in exactly the same manner that I do, and it does not seem unwise, therefore, to stress the importance of these matters from the point of view of safety, so as to get them as near the top of the pile of things that have to be done as possible.

From time to time I have discussed with you and Dr. Evans the fact that our margin of safety in handling the hazards of the manufacturing and blending of Ethyl Fluid is quite narrow. Dr. Evans reports an increasing number of occasions on which threshold symptoms occur, and I can not but believe, therefore, that the magnitude of lead exposure in connection with a number of operations is greater than it should be permitted to remain. Under the stress of the present conditions, the exposure is not likely to be decreased except by mechanical means, and the pressure put upon your staff for production is already great and may be increasingly greater. I believe it is necessary, therefore, in the interests of reasonable safety to get the Rotoclone installation accomplished at the earliest possible time.

In connection with the lead exposure referred to above, we have recently obtained experimental data which demonstrate quite conclusively I believe, that time is a very important factor and that

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the longer men work daily, and the longer period of years they work under conditions of exposure, the more lead they actually absorb, and the greater is the risk of lead intoxication. As you are well aware, we have had little or no improvement in the basic conditions of exposure in the lead plants for a number of years, and I would consider it very unfortunate indeed if the level of exposure were such that a number of cases of poisoning would come upon us either as the result of slight increases in time or overall length of duration of exposure. With these ideas in mind, I should like to apply every particle of pressure that might have any effectiveness in speeding up the improvements which we have agreed upon long ago as highly desirable.

Very truly yours,

RAK:is

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

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