

THE ASSOCIATED ETHYL COMPANY LIMITED

Artillery House, Artillery Row

London, S.W. 1

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New York 17, N. Y.
U.S.A.

13th March, 1945

Dear Oscar,

I find I have not acknowledged receipt of your letter of the 28th November, with which you sent me a detailed drawing of the new-type of fluid standpipe embodying the vacuum brake.

This is a most ingenious arrangement and would appear to be absolutely fool-proof.

I did raise one point which you might have overlooked concerning the 15,000 gallon tanks. I was wondering whether this size of tank had now been standardised in your own operations, or whether it was specially evolved for the Ras Tanura scheme.

I have been giving some thought to our post war operations at our overseas refineries where the volume of blending has already attained very large proportions. For example, at Abadan blends in the 16,000 ton tanks are requiring up to 180 drums at a time. I think that we ought to examine the whole problem, to see whether it is feasible to develop a transportation system which will be better than our present practice of handling drums. The transport of drums in vessels has always been a potential headache, and as the drums are becoming progressively older, we have had in recent months several leakers reported at various points in transit.

I have not given much detailed thought to the problem, but I have in mind the possibility of obtaining say, some welded pressure vessels which could be transported on a special design railway chassis, which could be off-loaded on to a ship. In other words, a detachable rail tank car. A scheme along such lines, I think, would be intrinsically safer and possibly more convenient. The drum is a relatively fragile package if it suffers rough handling. For example, we had a case of a leaker the other day, where steel rails were being loaded into the hold of a ship after drums had been loaded between decks, and a rail slipped out of the sling and pierced a drum. Another incident occurred where a drum was being loaded into a ship which was down by the stern and on release from the rope sling, the drum took charge and rolled towards the back of the hold and, of course, it would bump into the one bolt which projected from the bulkhead. This pierced a hole again.

It is admitted that our standard drum will take quite a severe beating if it falls on to, or is hit by, a blunt object, but a blow from a sharp edged object will pierce it as effectively as a can opener. I know these things should not happen, but certainly under wartime conditions they have done so.

I was feeling that a 3/4" welded bulk container, suitably lagged, might be a reasonable solution. I am just raising this point with you purely tentatively, to see if you have any ideas to offer. It is obviously a matter which would have to be gone into in great detail, both as regards cost and supply of containers, apart from the intrinsic and most important point of safety.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

S/ H. Fossett

H. Fossett

original by steamer
copy by airmail