

May 6, 1929

Mr. E. W. Webb,
Ethyl Gasoline Corp.,
25 Broadway,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Webb:

I received today your letter concerning the distribution of Ethyl Gasoline in Czecho-Slovakia. I have read also Bevan's letter which you enclosed, and I can appreciate very well the general situation since I visited Czecho-Slovakia with Mr. Maxwell last year. It seems to me quite certain that they will have to develop the business beginning on a small scale, but judging from the response we obtained at the time we visited them there should be very good opportunity for the expansion of their business. I noted the blue print of the mixing apparatus which you enclosed and I find it similar to one which I have already on hand. I have seen this mixing apparatus at Silverton and have found it not entirely satisfactory. It is certainly a very great improvement over the equipment that was being used previously at this point for mixing small quantities of gasoline for aircraft experimentation. It is certainly not all it should be, however, and I could only permit its use on the basis that it was being used fairly infrequently and not for very long periods of time, and that the men who were operating it understood perfectly the dangers connected with it and handled it with great care. The principal difficulty with this apparatus is that there are leaks in the connection lines and that such leaks are almost unavoidable. I would hesitate very long, therefore, before putting a number of such pieces of apparatus into use. It would be especially bad to put them into the hands of men who have had no previous experience with the handling of ETHYL fluid. This system is adapted only to the use of mixing Ethyl Gasoline in drum lots. I do not believe it should be thought of in mixing large quantities.

It would appear to me that the best way to get at this would be to find out the approximate amounts of Ethyl Gasoline which it would be convenient and commercially possible to mix at the various points in Czecho-Slovakia. There should be some storage tank in which it would be possible to mix one drum of fluid, or a fairly large fraction of a drum, at one time. If we can get at the probable needs of the Vacuum People, allowing a little something for the natural expansion of their business, I believe that we could from this data work out an equipment similar in principle to our present mixing equipments (but not so large) which would best serve their needs. I do not like to have to carry out experiments on new types of equipment in a new territory as far away as Czecho-Slovakia.

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The importance of this business is not sufficient, it seems to me, to jeopardize the eventual use of ETHYL fluid in other parts of Europe by taking chances on mixing equipment. Furthermore, I do not believe it is necessary in starting the business of the Vacuum People, to resort to a device like the one in the blue print. I think Bevan will find if he discusses the matter with the proper persons at Silverton, that they themselves do not regard this apparatus as entirely satisfactory. One of the men who has been working with it had some ideas for its improvement and if it should be found that it is capable of improvement to the point of doing away entirely with the possibility of leaks, it would be satisfactory. However, I am inclined to believe that it is one of those things with enough joints so that there is likelihood of leakage at one point or another at almost any time. It would be better, therefore, for us to get all the data we possibly can as to the places at which the Vacuum People would like to establish mixing points and as to the maximal amounts of gasoline they might expect to use in mixing at each one of these points, in order that we might from that determine just what type of equipment it is advisable to use. I feel confident it will be possible to do this, and knowing the interests and the enthusiasm of the representatives of the Vacuum Company in both Vienna and Prague, I should like very much to help them in any way that is possible. More than anything else, however, I wish to keep them out of trouble.

Sincerely yours,

RAK:EJ

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