

ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

MANUFACTURING AND TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

INTER-OFFICE
CORRESPONDENCE

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Copy:

Mr. E. W. New
Mr. J. C. Gonzales
Mr. O. B. Lewis
Dr. Graham Edgar
Mr. R. A. Kehoe
Mr. H. W. Kelley

January 19, 1937

Mr. J. C. Taylor,

Dear Coard:

We have received a copy of Mr. R. C. Murphy's memorandum of January 14 concerning the wreck on the Erie Railroad on January 11 at Olean, New York, in which a carload of ETHYL fluid drums was involved.

We feel that Mr. Murphy is to be congratulated on the excellent manner in which he handled this situation prior to the arrival of our two Manufacturing Department representatives, Messrs. Bezzum and Johnson.

We do believe, however, that there is one comment made by Mr. Murphy that should be removed from the records or at least commented upon for further explanation.

Referring to the fifth paragraph on page 1 of his memorandum, it is stated that "it was in the midst of a fire which broke out in one of the other cars and heated the contents of the Ethyl drums to such an extent that several exploded". In making a thorough examination of the returned drums, together with the comments on the inspection of the drums at the scene of the wreck, by our men, we do not believe that any explosion occurred from the fluid. In such case of loss of the contents the welding on the head of the drum let go, due entirely to the liquid expansion of the material brought about by the intense heat of the car. As soon as the fluid under pressure was released it immediately fired but did not explode. Had the drums exploded there would have been evidence from fragmentary sections of the drums; such is not the case.

The I.C.C. Regulations state that ETHYL fluid shall be loaded in to packages such that at a temperature of 130°F. same shall not be more than container full. Presumably the fire created a heat beyond this so that through the liquid expansion the drums simply let go. From hydrostatic tests run on many of our drums we have found that the heads will be released at a pressure between 150 and 175 pounds per square inch.

Mr. Murphy also suggests that we should institute claim against the Erie Railroad for all expenses involved, including traveling, salaries and living expenses of our men working on the job, as well as the value of the material and drums lost. We do not concur in this view as we feel that we have some responsibility in the transportation of the dangerous material and should bear our due share in preventing an extension of the hazards involved. We are, therefore, setting up claim only for the material value.

Very truly yours,

A:K

J. H. Schaefer

N 5626

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