

January 15, 1930

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

Dear Mr. Webb:

I think that your proposal to discuss the matter of Mr. Pierson personally with one of the executives of the British-American Company is a very wise one. It may be a matter of some importance to you to know exactly what Mr. Pierson's relationship to the British-American Company is. Pierson was an employee of a jobber, Joseph Forcier at Gravelbourg. I do not believe that Mr. Forcier is in any way a part of the British-American organization, being merely a customer of theirs. I suppose, therefore, the question of the responsibility of the British-American Company would not be a direct one in the matter at all, except to the extent that their representative informed Mr. Forcier that there was no danger whatever in the handling of Ethyl Gasoline and that no precautions of any kind were necessary. It was this point that I felt particularly keen about, for it struck me that the British-American were departing somewhat from the instructions we had given to them. I do not think this is at all remarkable, because I am sure that the sales representatives of any distributing company believe despite the precautions that have been given them that there is no occasion for considering that there is any danger in the handling of Ethyl Gasoline. Since they believe this way one can hardly expect them to act differently. It is very difficult to get people in general to understand the difference between a proven danger and a possible one. It is exactly for that reason that I have maintained for the long time this matter has been under discussion, that the precautions which have been advised are not likely to be followed. However, there are very few situations in which the type of exposure experienced by Mr. Pierson is likely to occur. I know of only one situation comparable to it, namely the one existing in New York City where barreling of the gasoline is necessary.

KE 0001210

Mr. Webb page 2

In the matter of Pierson's further employment I have not indicated to him the necessity for discontinuing his employment because I did not feel it necessary that he should. I have explained to him the necessity for care, have told him to avoid the sort of skin contact that he has previously experienced, and have permitted him to return to his work without any further advice. However, he explained to me that the conditions which made it necessary for him to work in the manner described in the report had been done away with. The fact is that they received shipments of Ethyl Gasoline at a time at which they were quite unprepared to handle it, and the drumming became necessary merely because of lack of storage facilities. The storage facilities have now been provided and there will be no further occasion for this type of exposure. I do not feel that Pierson is any more likely to suffer from normal exposure than are thousands of other individuals. I am perfectly willing to take the chance on this in order to see whether or not anything further comes of it. I am sure that you will understand that I would not even think of doing such a thing if I had any reason to believe that it would result injuriously to Pierson. I shall keep in contact with him, and I have asked him to keep me informed from time to time as to his condition. If anything new develops I will let you know at once.

Very truly yours,

RAK:EJ

KE 0001211