

STANDARD OIL COMPANY

(INDIANA)

910 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE

DR. FRANK R. MORTON,
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL DEPT.

CHICAGO, December 4, 1931.

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe,
College of Medicine,
University of Cincinnati,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

Replying to your letter of December 2nd, we have just lost our first case of any kind before the Industrial Board of Chicago, and that goes back to 1913. The history of the case is as follows:

One of our service station men, a month or six weeks after he had been having trouble with his eyes, came in to see me and was referred to our eye man. Our eye man, a good one, diagnosed his condition as an iritis; primarily an onset and not secondary to any disease of the conjunctiva or to the cornea.

This man was treated by his own physician because we denied responsibility. His own physician was neglectful or incompetent with the result that the iris became flexed to the lens, and he had a secondary glaucoma, necessitating an operation and with the operation loss of sight in the eye.

The complainant in presenting his case claimed that in putting Ethyl gasoline in a car one of the hoses sprinkled gasoline into his right eye. He claims immediately, even before filling the tank, to have gone in and washed his eye out with water, making a cup with his hand. He did not visit a doctor until four or five days later. The doctor in his testimony made a diagnosis of iritis and excluded in his testimony any symptoms of conjunctivitis. There was no pussy discharge; in fact, he said the discharge was watery and sterile, although he did not make smears.

We introduced evidence on experimental basis of some guinea pigs who had Ethyl

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gasoline dropped in their eyes every day over a period of twenty days with no bad after effects. We were unable, from a legal standpoint, to put on witnesses of a number of cases of men who had gotten Ethyl gasoline in their eyes, because we could not demonstrate legally that the gasoline they got in their eyes came out of the same tank and was exactly the same gasoline.

Of course, we will carry this case up to the higher courts. We are waiting for the transcript of the same.

This case, both before and during the trial, brought to my mind the question as to why the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation has not conducted experiments to show the effect upon the human skin, possibly the human eye, certainly on animal eyes, of any irritation from Ethyl Gasoline as it is marketed? There is nothing in the literature on this matter and I know that most of the claims which we get from time to time are based upon the conclusion of doctors that Ethyl gasoline is a mysterious poison; that its possibilities of harm are kept under cover and that almost anything can be caused, either by getting Ethyl Gasoline on the skin, or in the eye, or even the inhalation of same. I should think it would have paid the Ethyl Corporation to have conducted experiments in a good clinic under proper observation along this line.

We are going to be called upon within the next few months to defend a skin disease which is supposed to have been caused by gasoline spilling on a man's body. The skin disease has been demonstrated as being pityriasis versicolor, a disease allied to the ring worm variety. We have worked this case up very well. Have pictures of the skin, pictures of the fungus and spores and have done everything possible to get our case in shape, but, as you know, "Ethyl" is a very mysterious person and it makes it awfully difficult to explain, after the newspaper notoriety which the DuPont Company and the New Jersey Company had covering a period of years.

Wish you would let me have your views about this experimental proposition.

With kindest personal regards,

Very truly yours,