

E2-11

INTERNATIONAL SMELTING AND REFINING COMPANY
East Chicago, Indiana

G. E. JOHNSON
Plant Manager



April 26th, 1945

ACKNOWLEDGED RECE

4/30/45

Mr. Frederick Laist, Vice President
International Smeltg. and Refg. Co.
25 Broadway - Room 1720
New York 4, New York

Labor Situation

Dear Mr. Laist:

Just after our telephone conversation of yesterday, we met with the Union Committee at 10 A.M. to discuss the packer rate controversy. Mr. Piani, Field Representative, made the following demands for the Union:

1. They want a guaranteed hourly base rate of \$1.03 per hour for packing zinc oxide instead of the present guaranteed rate of 86¢ per hour.

The Union used the following as arguments to justify their demands that the Zinc Oxide Packers should be paid the same guaranteed rate as the White Lead Packers:

1. The work is too hard
2. The work is dangerous to the health of the employee and requires constant medical supervision by the employee's personal physician.

Work Is Too Hard

We pointed out to the Committee that former packing crews have packed 1200 to 1400 bags per day, whereas this particular crew is objecting to packing anything more than 800 bags per day and feels that 1,000 bags per day is more than they can do regularly.

Health Hazards

We pointed out that we had recently installed dust collecting equipment on all of the leaded zinc oxide packers and that this equipment should greatly reduce the hazard of lead absorption in this department. They felt that zinc oxide dust was dangerous to health even though it was lead-free. One of the arguments used was that the zinc oxide dust created constipation.

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Minimum Guaranteed Rate

We frankly told them that the White Lead Packing rates are decidedly out of line and too high. We offered to equalize the packing rates at the Oxide and White Lead Plant based upon the "take home" pay. This they very quickly refused to do. We sounded them out on the possibility of eliminating the incentive white lead packing rate and the establishment of hourly rates for the packers to avoid any further comparison in the packing rate between the two plants. This suggestion was rejected.

The Union suggested that if we could not agree on rates or change in working conditions, that the three men composing one packing crew, who have complained about the work endangering their health, be transferred to laborer's duty in the labor gang. This we agreed to do with the following stipulation - that the change would be made Monday, April 30th, and that the Union would jointly sign a notice to the effect that these jobs were available to any employee in the plant. This notice has been posted.

The Union understands that if none of our present employees care to work on the packer crew, we will hire other employees through the United States Employment Service Office and that the former crew will lose their seniority rights on the packer job.

We hope these decisions will close the grievance.

Sincerely yours



GEJ/bm

cc: Mr. J. R. Robbins
Mr. W. H. Hoover

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