

March 31, 1930

Mr. A. E. Mittnacht,
Ethyl Gasoline Corp.,
25 Broadway,
New York City.

Dear Mr. Mittnacht:

Last week I had Dr. Machle visit the Standard Oil Company's mixing plant in Havana. We had not visited this plant for some time and it was my feeling that it was not in sufficiently good condition that we should allow it to continue indefinitely without inspection. Dr. Machle's report indicates that this mixing plant is not even as good as I previously thought it was, and it is my feeling that if mixing is to continue at this point as in the past certain very definite improvements should be made.

This mixing plant is in all probability the worst one which we have anywhere at the present time. To summarize its bad points briefly: the platform is too small for the storage of the seven or eight drums which they receive at a shipment; fluid is therefore stored in a general storehouse during part of the year; there is no fence or other screening around the platform. Some seven or eight drums are shipped at a time and when these are received one of them is put on the storage platform (or perhaps two), the others are put in the general storage quarters. The workmen deny that this is the case but there is some conflict in their statements. On the one hand they say that the drums are kept out of the direct sun, which, of course, is entirely necessary, but on the other hand they say that there is no room on the storage platform for them. There can be very little question despite their protests that the only other place to put them is in the storehouse, and this is undoubtedly where they go. It is not even worth while to argue whether they do or whether they do not, for it is perfectly plain when one is on the spot to see that this is the case. The platform is of box car height which would be all right except for the fact that there is no railroad siding and the drums are rolled from a boat and then are either lifted or rolled by means of skids onto the platform. Obviously if neither a truck or box car is used to carry the drums there is no point in having a platform at this height thus causing a risk of injury to the men from the slipping or rolling of one of the drums. There should be,

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of course, a fence around the platform in accordance with our usual practise, with provisions for storing all of the drums at this point under a roof to protect them from the sun, and with facilities for locking the place so that no unauthorized person can gain access to it.

The mixing at this point is infrequent, so that the actual dangers arising from mixing are not of serious consequence. However, the storage of the fluid in an enclosed place is obviously a bad thing and could lead to rather tragic results in case of accident. I should be inclined to regard the whole matter somewhat more leniently except for the fact that it is outside of this country and it is somewhat to our discredit to have the worst mixing plant in a foreign place in the case of people whom we have no reason to expect to take unusual precautions. I understand that the whole equipment was built according to the specifications of the New York office of the Standard Oil Company and that no representative of the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation really had anything to do with determining the type of equipment to be used. It is distinctly bad policy in every way to have a bad mixing point outside the country, and it is especially bad since it makes it more difficult for us to properly supervise it. I would suggest, therefore, that it be put up to the Standard Oil Company to see to it that this equipment is brought up to our usual standard; that it have a properly located platform of sufficient size to take care of their entire storage; that it be properly roofed; and that it be properly enclosed. If they do not feel that this expense is justified in a place that does so little mixing I would suggest the alternative of discontinuing mixing.

Very truly yours,

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