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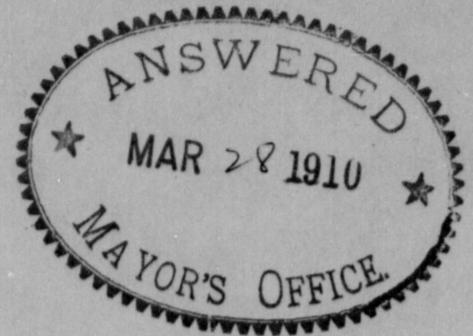
**Fire Dept.-Municipal
Explosives Commission**

1910-1912

Ernst J. Lederle, Ph.D.
Commissioner

J

City of New York,
Department of Health,
Office of the Commissioner of Health.



CONFIDENTIAL.

New York, March 25, 1910.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor of the City of New York,
City Hall, New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Mayor:

When you have the opportunity, I wish you would look into the operations of the Explosives Commission. Two chemists of very high standing, of this city, were on this commission in former years - Dr. A. A. Breneman, 97 Water street, and Dr. Charles F. McKenna, 50 Church street. I understand they both resigned on account of intolerable conditions. I am sure these gentlemen will be pleased to give you any further information.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ernst J. Lederle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

MUN EXPLOSIVE

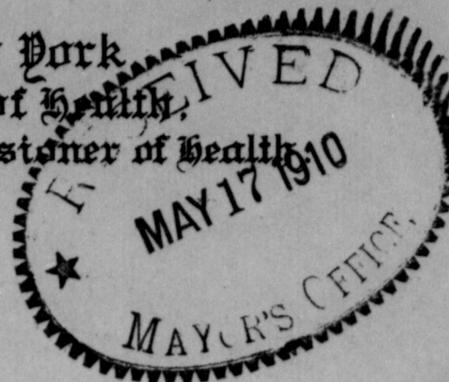
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Mar 25/10

M. to Municipal
Express, Fort M

Ernst J. Lederle, Ph.D.
Commissioner

City of New York
Department of Health
Office of the Commissioner of Health



Explosives Commission.

May 16, 1910.

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Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor of the City of New York,
City Hall, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Mayor:-

Referring again to the above matter, I would say that I hesitate recommending a chemist for this Commission, at this time, on account of the feeling that the organization of the Commission prevents a technical man doing effective work. I quote, from a statement made by Prof. A. A. Breneman, 97 Water street, a well known chemist of this City and a former member of the above Commission:

"The M. E. C. has to deal with matters involving the safety of life and property in the City of New York, and should have authority corresponding with its responsibility.

The Fire Commissioner should not be a member of the Commission and the Commission should have no connection, direct or indirect, with the Fire Department.

The M. E. C. should have some inspectors of its own, or better, the Bureau of Combustibles, now of the Fire Department, should be put under the direction of the Commission. The present relation of this Bureau, to the Fire Department on one hand, and the M. E. C. on the other, has been a fruitful source of abuse and inefficiency. The M. E. C. has, at present, no means of knowing how its regulations are enforced, or of taking such note of their operation as is required in adapting them further to municipal conditions. An Explosives Commission having the broad field of work now given to the M. E. C. by the ordinance under which it is created - but made up wholly or largely of men of technical

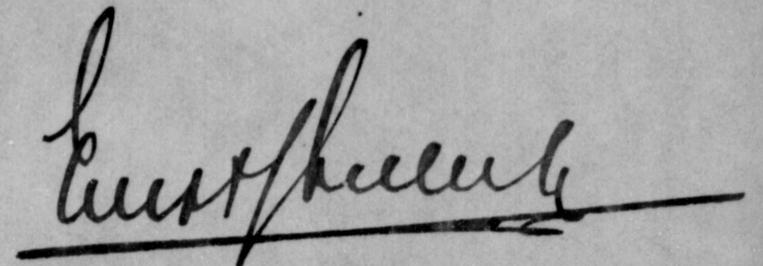
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training and given adequate authority and facilities for its work - could, in time, make a wonderful reduction in the annual fire losses of this City. The task is one involving much study and the methods are yet largely to be developed. I have corresponded with the authorities of most of the great cities on these subjects and know the conditions that obtain with them at present. Some of them have adopted many of our own regulations and all are looking to New York to take the lead in this work, which is mainly, as yet, to be done.

Such a Commission could work in harmony with the Fire Department, not hampering it nor being hampered by it, but supplying, as an advisory body, an element of scientific and technical guidance which is essential to its proper development under modern conditions."

Some of his recommendations are rather drastic, and I am not prepared to say whether they are feasible.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "E. J. Connelley", written over a horizontal line.

Commissioner.

C.

May 16/1910

W. to Municipal
Explosive Commission



**FIRE DEPARTMENT
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

December 23, 1910.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor, City of New York.

S i r : -

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of December 22nd. enclosing letter from Mr. Ernest Harvier with reference to the Municipal Explosives Commission which I return herewith. The Municipal Explosives Commission exists by ordinance of the Board of Aldermen passed in pursuance of provisions of the City charter.

The Municipal Explosives Commission is composed of four members, appointed by the Mayor, one of whom must be recommended by the New York Chemical Society. The Fire Commissioner is ex officio Chairman.

The present Commission was appointed by your Honor. The members are -

Frederick J. Maywald; recommended by the New York Chemical Society; he is a practical chemist.

General George O. Eaton, who was a member of the Commission which originally took up the work of regulating explosives in this city. He is a graduate of the Military Academy and has been handling explosives for mining and other operations the greater part of his life.

Peter P. Acritelli; former Coroner of New York City for some years; has had unusual facilities for observing the dangers and effects of explosives while serving in that capacity.

Sidney Harris; is a lawyer. In my opinion it is desirable

December 23, 1910.

Fire Commission
25 Letters to Municipal Judges
Acknowledgment letter of Dec.

Hon. William J. Gaynor:

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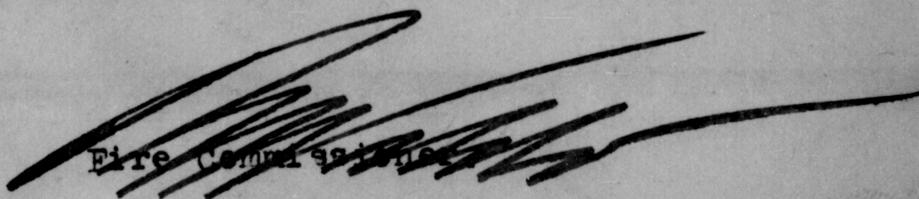
to have a legal man on this board as it is required to draw up regulations.

They have been working on and are about to complete an entire revision of the existing explosive regulations. This is a work of considerable magnitude, of the greatest importance to the City, and requires careful study of actual conditions. The general use of automobiles has brought large quantities of gasoline into common use. This is a subject which requires careful regulation.

I have had the accident in the Grand Central Terminal thoroughly investigated and cannot find that the Municipal Explosives Commission could in any way have prevented the same.

In my opinion this Commission is doing excellent, intelligent and conscientious work and is worthy of your support.

Very respectfully,



Fire Commissioner

D.

December 23, 1910.

ack Letter of E. Harvey
Acknowledging letter of Dec.
22 relative to Municipal Explosives
Commission.

WILLIAM J. GAYNOR:

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The College of the City of New York
Department of Chemistry

New York, March 23, 1911.

Hon. W. J. Gaynor,
Mayor City of New York.

My dear Sir:-

In reply to your letter of the 21st inst., concerning the Municipal Explosives Commission, I beg leave to say that the chemists who have served on the Commission have felt that its efficiency was hampered within by virtue of the fact that the Commission is regarded as an appendage to the Fire Department and so treated by the Fire Commissioner, who is Chairman of the Commission. The activity of the entire Commission is restrained from without by its lack of power. The Commission has no inspectors of its own and no control over inspectors detailed from the Fire or other Departments. In short, it may make regulations, but has no way of learning whether the regulations have been enforced. In connection with this I refer you to the bottom of page 429 in Municipal Chemistry, a copy of which you have.

I am quite sure that the three chemists who have served on the Commission, but are no longer available for such service, would welcome an opportunity to explain the difficulties to you in person should you care to have more specific knowledge of what this important Commission might but cannot now accomplish.

The names of the three gentlemen are

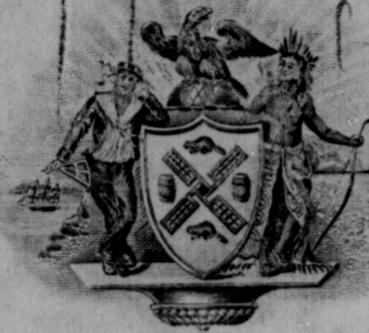
Dr. Charles F. McKenna, 50 Church St., City.
Prof. A. A. Breneman, 97 Water Street, City.
Mr. F. J. Maywald, 89 Pine Street, City.

Yours very respectfully,

Chas. Baskerville

Chairman New York Section,
American Chemical Society.

CB-TFO.



Adams

**FIRE DEPARTMENT
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

February 5, 1912.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor, City of New York.

S i r : -

Referring to your several favors transmitting complaints against the Municipal Explosives Commission, I have caused an investigation to be made.

No one has made a specific charge of wrongdoing, except that it was found that in Commissioner Waldo's time Explosives Commissioner Maywald, the chemical member of the Commission, had been retained by a cleansing fluid concern. Maywald was promptly required to resign.

I interviewed Mr. Ernest Harvier, who had absolutely nothing to sustain the general charge against this Commission which he made in a letter to you. He was unable to cite a single instance of wrongdoing.

The transactions of the Commission for 1911 were carefully reviewed and contain no evidences of any crooked act.

I had Mr. John D. Crimmins have a heart to heart talk with Mr. Donovan, recommended by him to you and the last member appointed by you to the Commission, and Donovan gave his colleagues a clean bill of health.

The regulations formulated by the Commission seem

February 5, 1912.

to be reasonable and necessary, and, to my mind, represent a great deal of hard and conscientious work. The Bureau of Combustibles, which carries out these regulations, has uncovered nothing that reflects upon the Commission.

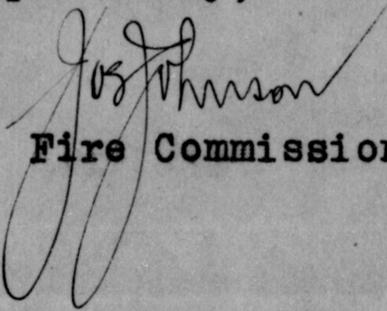
At this stage, therefore, I am constrained to return a verdict of "not guilty."

The members of the Commission now are -

Gen. George O. Eaton, Sidney Harris, Bartholomew Donovan.

On account of the death of Commissioner John Harold Wainwright a vacancy exists, to be filled by Your Honor on the recommendation of the New York Section of the American Chemical Society, Dr. A. G. Langmuir, President, #9 Van Brunt street, Brooklyn. I shall thank you to make this appointment at your convenience.

Very respectfully,


Fire Commissioner.

D.

Feb. 5/1912.

Re. Municipal
Exploives Commission.



MUNICIPAL EXPLOSIVES COMMISSION

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

April 8th, 1912.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
M a y o r.



Sir:-

Under separate cover we are sending you a copy of the regulations governing the manufacture, transportation, storage, sale and use of explosive and combustible substances within the City of New York, prepared by this Commission and approved by the Fire Commissioner, and in force since January 3, 1912.

The Corporation Counsel advises us that, under what may be termed an unfortunate provision of the present law, this Commission, while having the power to enact new regulations on the above referred to subjects (when approved by constituted authority), nevertheless has no power to amend or repeal any such regulations.

With a code of nearly six hundred sections, embracing so many subjects and as comprehensive and farreaching as the new regulations, we have always recognized that actual experience with same would show at least some weak spots to be strengthened. A few such have already been discovered in the sixty days that the regulations have been in force. We regret that we cannot promptly correct these; but it is proper to add that no serious defects in the regulations or unreasonable requirements have thus far been shown as applying to the various industries which the regulations seek to control in the protection of the lives and property of our citizens. Indeed, we are sure you will be pleased to learn that the representatives of no occupation or industry (most of whom repeatedly appeared before

us at our various public hearings at which the tentative regulations were being considered previous to final adoption) have either in person or by letter expressed disapproval of the regulations as finally adopted and now in force. In fact, many of the trades interested have, either by personal appearance of their representatives or by letter, expressed their satisfaction with the regulations in their present form as being practical and at the same time fair; and the individuals who have expressed any objection, so far as we have been able to learn, have been surprisingly few.

In the mean time, and while attending to our current work, we are, as opportunity occurs, preparing a revision of the regulations ready to be put in force when the law will permit.

We shall greatly appreciate it if you will, at your leisure, look over the regulations in their present form, particularly as to their scope and underlying principles or otherwise, and indicate to us any suggestions that may occur to you which should go into the revised edition.

Respectfully,

MUNICIPAL EXPLOSIVES COMMISSION

Geo. J. Galou
Archibald Dowman
Richard

Commissioners.