



9-25-1919

## Letter from C. J. Murphy to Attorney General Langer Regarding E. F. Meier, September 25, 1919

C. J. Murphy  
*United States Railroad Administration*

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UNITED STATES RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

W. G. MCADOO, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF RAILROADS

GREAT NORTHERN RAILROAD

LAW DEPARTMENT

C. J. MURPHY, ATTORNEY FOR NORTH DAKOTA  
T. A. TONER, ASSISTANT ATTORNEY

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE  
GRAND FORKS, N. D.  
RECEIVED  
ANSWERED Sept 25, 1916.  
Referred to

Hon. Wm. Langer,  
Attorney General.

Dear Sir:

Answering your letter of the 16th:

I was not aware that Meier had been dismissed. Will inquire and find out about it. I desire to say, however, that in my humble judgment this man has been acting very foolishly for the past couple of years in reference to the enforcement of the prohibition law at the station where he was located - Berwick. He got at outs with a druggist there named Knoll, who was putting out certain patent medicines which contained alcohol. He developed into a sort of a detective but a poor grade one, and more or less on suspicion started to open and separate shipments to Knoll and hold up delivery of parts that he considered contraband and offer delivery of parts he considered legal. Naturally Knoll objected contending all of the stuff was OK and refused to accept the split shipments. My understanding is that most of the stuff was so medicated that it would be impracticable to use as a beverage, and I believe Knoll had the Agricultural College make analysis, and the stuff was OK'ed. Off and on Meier used to write me for advice, and Knoll wrote repeatedly to various representatives of the Company, protesting against Meier's procedure. The latter was repeatedly instructed by me, as well as his direct superior officers, to drop the idea that it was his duty to break into and examine every shipment to Knoll, but to make delivery of all shipments which on the face of the record appeared legal, regardless of his mere suspicion that something might be wrong. That he would have his hands full attending to his duties as agent of the company, without trying to make a sleuth and state enforcement officer out of himself. I think he then took up with the States Attorney's office and your office, and I have no doubt he made strong charges as to the illegality of Knoll's shipments, with the result that proceedings were started for the seizure and condemnation of several of Knoll's shipments. We notified Knoll to appear and defend his rights and that we would not be bound for damages by any judgment that might be entered, and I understand Knoll did appear in justice court and got a split on results. That both he and the State appealed to the Dist rict Court

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where a trial was had and all of this stuff was ordered destroyed a few months ago. My information is, however, that Knoll did not appear in district court, and that if he had, a large portion of the stuff seized would have been ordered released. On his default I think the judgment ordered everything destroyed. I don't know why Knoll defaulted in District Court, as I feel quite sure he would have been entitled to get practically all of his stuff released. Perhaps he figured he could hold the Company for damages, as he has presented a large claim covering all the seizures and we are now trying to convince him that he cannot recover, but do not know how we will come out. I feel that the course pursued by Meier was unjustifiable, and would lead to trouble and expense to the company, and I wrote him to this effect. Perhaps his superior officers, who also labored diligently with him to mind his own business, may feel, now that claims have been presented and trouble with Knoll is on, that he has outlived his usefulness as an agent, and that for the good of the service, his services should be dispensed with. When I hear further, will advise you.

Yours truly,

