

Burnham
Sept. 22nd, 1944

Mr. W. B. Heath:

As you know, I sent boiler foreman Klipka from Burnham to Durango to see if we could get the work straightened out and moving on engine 346.

I fully understand that the boiler on this engine is not in the best of condition but we are endeavoring to get this engine in condition so we can get four more years of service.

In regard to the new flues which you requested, we do not put new flues in any of our engines. We piece and reset and use secondhand flues and of course some of them are pitted and we have been getting four years service and in some cases 250,000 miles without experiencing any trouble. The only new flues we use is to fill out a set where we do not have any secondhand flues available. After all, you should realize that we could not operate if we were to renew all the parts every time an engine receives classified repairs.

I am wondering what is wrong with you or your boiler-maker as I have had so much trouble trying to get the work done on engine 346 and there is evidently something out of line. In the first place this engine was outlawed and set aside at Durango for about three weeks and you did not even let me know that the engine was set aside and I do not believe you would have started the work on this engine if I had not shown up at Durango on July 28th and told you to get started. Then on your M-197 you showed that the engine would be held three months, or until October 31st, and I took it upon myself to advance this date one month which still is altogether too long to take care of the work on this engine.

After you got started on this engine it took you about six weeks to get the interior of the boiler scaled. This was after I had built you part of a new steam dome, had your tires turned, new brasses applied and lateral taken up and flues pieced and all of this material had been returned and was on hand at Durango. Then it was necessary for me to take boiler foreman Taylor from Alamosa to Durango and we made an interior inspection of this boiler and recommended and had one patch made for the second course, and I allowed you to put on a boilermaker helper and sent a boilermaker from Burnham to assist your boilermaker in taking care of the work on this engine and I am still having considerable trouble in getting the repairs completed.

I also understand that your boilermaker was insisting on laying off and taking the boilermaker which I sent down from Burnham out on a fishing party and making no effort at all to get the work completed on this engine.

There is certainly something out of line at Durango and I want you to get it straightened out at once. Please advise.

CC W.H.Sagstetter A.E.Rice

R.M. Heath

Durango, Colorado,
September 24th, '44

Mr. R. McLean
Burnham, Colorado

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of Sept. 22nd in reference to the time that has expired on engine 346,

Your statement that I did not notify you that the engine was returned to us for three weeks is explained to be incorrect by the fact that the engine was returned to the Rio Grande by the R. G. Southern on July 16th. Please refer to my H-20 telegram of that same date notifying you, Mr. Bagstetter, Mr. Rice, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Tively of that fact. My report of joint inspection followed immediately.

During the ten days between July 16th and 26th, when you were here, Mr. Cumming was here and said that he thought you intended to have us renew the flues here. However, I did not consider I had the authority to begin work on class 4 F without having been instructed to do so by you. Since the Durango shop hasn't done anything but light repair work for fifteen or more years I didn't know whether the company wanted to do this sort of work here or not. I did know this boilermaker did not and does not want it here since he has always done only light repair work and laborers work for a few hours on nights until I managed to get him working days.

I explained to you and to Mr. Bagstetter when I was in Denver why I placed the date of Oct. 31st on the engine. That reason being that I didn't know when I would get the wheels, flues and dome, which I had sent to Burnham for repairs. But at that time Mr. Rice told Mr. Bagstetter and I that the repairs were completed and were being sent down here then.

Before leaving Durango on vacation I stressed the fact to this boilermaker that he must have the boiler scaled ready to go on with the repairs when the parts came from Burnham. When I returned the boiler hadn't been touched. Had he done as I told him to do he would have found the interior of the boiler pitted a week sooner. This is typical of the lack of co-operation I get from him. To check on his type of work I refer you to the boilermakers who have been here this month. It would have been unnecessary to have had the expense of these extra boilermakers if Schilthius hadn't refused to buck rivets, saying the back injuries he sustained in a collision with a Rio Grande Motorway Bus has disabled him to a great extent.

In reference to your paragraph about the new flues. I don't recall requesting new flues, but did follow your instructions and sent to Burnham shops the entire set of flues out of the engine. When they were returned we found most of them defective and not usable. You will recall marking some of them yourself Sept. 13th. and telling Schilthius to throw out the bad orders. He said 114 were bad and refused to continue putting them in without your O.K. I wired you to send more flues, and that is when you sent the boilermaker foreman Klipka down to inspect them. He instructed us to weld 37 of the 114 and said when he went back through Alamosa he would send 40 more flues, which I am receiving on the extra West this morning.

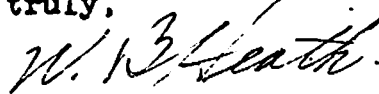
I surely agree, to my regret, we are taking too much time. As I see the causes of the unnecessary and expensive delay is that the boilermaker did not follow my instructions and scale the boiler when I told him to, and the defective flues. If they had arrived in Durango in condition to put in the first time it would, as I am sure you agree, have speeded up things considerably.

The boilermaker did want to quit in the middle of the day to go fishing. He was not permitted to do so, of course.

Some of the men resent doing heavy work here. Once they get used to the idea we will operate satisfactorily. Since Schilthius isn't agreeable to pitching in and putting out heavy work, and since he has asked you for a transfer, I am convinced another man who ~~want~~ would work only for our Company, which is job enough for one man without outside work, would be more satisfactory for our purpose here.

Our stock rush is on and has been for two weeks. However we will do everything possible to get the engine out on the 30th

Yours truly,



P. S.

Telegram sent to Burnham Shops 9/25/44. "Inspector Harms is here today and examined engine 346 flues. Found safe end weld defective. He suggests you examine flue roller mandrel for being out of center as nearly all welds failed to fuse on one side. Also suggests that daily test be made by bending flues at weld." I am sending you sample of test Mr. Harms made on flues out of the 346 this date on 116.

CC W.H. Sagstetter - A. E. Rice.