

February 14, 1925.

Dr. Alice Hamilton,
School of Public Health, Harvard University,
55 Van Dyke Street,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Doctor Hamilton:

I am very glad to receive your letter of February 12th with reference to the subject of tetra-ethyl lead and in reply to attempt to explain to you briefly the sequence of events to date with reference to this matter.

Several years ago I was informed that a corporation intended to use something of this sort and began to initiate an investigation as to its possible harmfulness. I was informed, however, that the Bureau of Mines was about to undertake a similar investigation and, of course, took no further steps. Some months ago I received a letter from Dr. Vandell Henderson calling my attention to the use of the substance and suggesting a conference. I addressed a letter to each of the persons whom I could ascertain were interested in this matter asking for advice as to whether they considered a conference advisable and whether the present was an opportune time. The majority of the answers were to the effect that it would be better to postpone the conference until further investigation had been made by men working along this line.

Several days ago I received a letter from Dr. Henderson enclosing a copy of a letter which he had written criticising the technique used by the Bureau of Mines in their observations and a somewhat similar letter from Dr. Haven Emerson with reference to the matter. I at once took the matter up with our scientific division and appointed the first vacant date, which is next Monday, for us to further consider the subject of calling a conference and I shall be glad to communicate with you with reference to our decision. I personally can see no possible objection to a round table discussion of the whole matter and shall again take up the question of a conference with those interested.

I am extremely gratified that the Garage Workers Union feels that this Service would conduct an impartial investigation and more that you feel the same way about it.

I hope that you had a pleasant and profitable trip to Moscow and I would like very much to have an opportunity of discussing your trip with you.

Sincerely yours,

Surgeon General.