

September 25, 1930

Herr Dr. Karl Wurth,
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Schlebusch,
Mulheimerstr. 119,
Germany.

Dear Doctor Wurth:

Allow me to thank you for the reprint of your article which you so kindly sent me recently.

At the present time our Laboratory is not doing work on the lead paint problem directly. However, we have experienced a number of situations in which the lead paint problem has been seen to be of importance. We have had an opportunity to study a number of children, some of whom have sucked the paint from toys and beds and similar objects inside the house. We have also had occasion to analyze the dust in city streets and on the ledges of buildings for its lead content. We have found moderate quantities of lead in dusts at almost any point from which we choose to select it. Presumably a large portion of this lead dust is the result of crumbling of paint used on the exterior of buildings, vehicles, etc. We are not in position to state the significance of this matter, and we are not at all certain that it has any bearing upon the public health. We have found that the normal individual, both in industry and out of it, is absorbing lead regularly and is excreting some quantity regularly in both the faeces and urine. It is our opinion that this is the result of minute food contamination. However, this is not a proven point, and we shall find it necessary to investigate further. I am sending you two reprints which contain some information along these lines.

In the matter of the attitude of the American Government on the use of lead paints, I am sure you will find that much has been said but that nothing has been done. So far as I know there are at present no legal restrictions upon the use of lead paints either internally or externally in houses in the United States, nor do I know of any publications which discuss the question thoroughly or which state the attitude of the Government. I think it can be fairly said that the Public Health authorities in the United States are not convinced that there is adequate evidence upon which to base legal action for the discontinuance of the use of lead paints.

Very cordially yours,