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August 16, 1965

Dr. S. Colum Gilfillan
1215 Ocean Avenue
Santa Monica, California 90401

Dear Doctor Gilfillan:

I have returned from my vacation with only a short interval of time before I take off for Santiago, Chile, for a brief (3 months) assignment as a consultant to the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. After my return (sometime in December), I shall return to the Kettering Laboratory, at least, for a time. Until my plans have gone beyond this point, I can be reached through the Laboratory.

I can suggest an answer to only one of the points in your letter, that which is concerned with the state of lead in the human body and in ground water. While it is altogether likely that the lead in the skeleton exists predominantly, as inorganic phosphate, the facts have not been demonstrated in an entirely satisfactory manner. The differentiation in which you are interested might well be achieved, but a very considerable amount of investigation would be required to establish the facts.

As to the "Apathie" due to the absorption of lead by persons in the population of the United States of America, I should consider it advisable to substantiate the existence of this deplorable situation, before speculating on its causation. Just why one would pick on lead as the important factor in the production of this alleged American docility, in the midst of the complexities of the modern urban environment, is not apparent to me. This element is indeed remarkably ambivalent. I would be able to occupy an additional lifetime, I am sure, in pursuing its physiological and pathological potentialities. I would urge that some effort be made to investigate the hypotheses advanced through speculation, before getting very much aroused by them.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Kehoe, M.D.