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September 9, 1914

Dear Mr. Gates:

You are probably receiving about this time from Mr. Rose the notice of an adjourned meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission to be held on September 21. As you know, it was felt at the last meeting, in view of the considerations forcibly presented in writing by you against the recommendations of Mr. Rose in regard to the continuation of the hookworm work for one or two years more, that an immediate decision of the matter one way or the other would be necessarily hasty, and that it was also desirable that Mr. Rose should present in a little more detail the programme necessary for the winding up of the work to his own satisfaction, together with an estimate of the expense. It was thought that due consideration for the staff of the Commission made an early decision desirable, and for this reason the meeting adjourned subject to Mr. Rose's call at such time as he should have his material ready. Before fixing the date, I inquired of Mr. Rockefeller what his convenience would be, and he suggested either September 21 or 22, and Mr. Rose accordingly sent out his notices for the 21st. It seems to me, however, most desirable that we should have a complete attendance of the Committee when this important matter comes up, so that we may, if possible, be of one mind as to what it is best to do. If, therefore, you are not to be back from Lake George by September 21, will you kindly let me know what will be the earliest date at which you could attend the meeting, as

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it will be a perfectly simple matter to put the date ahead if necessary. Moreover, I have reason to believe that a date three or four days later would be more acceptable to Dr. Flexner, whose presence, it seems to me, we ought to count upon.

The only reason for my being concerned with the date of the meeting is that this question came up in Mr. Murphy's absence, and as I have been the only one of the Committee in the office since the early part of August, it has rather fallen to me to act as the medium of communication.

You will be interested to know that we have just authorized Mr. Rose to retain the services of Dr. Victor G. Heiser for the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Heiser will receive for this purpose a year's leave of absence from the Public Health Service, and will probably retire from the Directorship of Public Health in the Philippine Islands. Mr. Rose, Mr. Murphy and I have all seen Dr. Heiser, and are most favorably impressed with his appearance as well as with his official record. It remains to be determined whether he shall go into service at once as Director of our work in Egypt, Ceylon and the East generally, or whether, in view of the disturbed international situation, we shall keep him here as our chief adviser in formulating our approach to the general problem of public health.

To go back to the hookworm work in the South, I do not believe that there is any difference of opinion among us in regard to the fundamental principles. We are all agreed that the eradication of hookworm disease is a responsibility which the South must assume. Our function has been to point the way. The only difference of opinion is in regard to just how far we should go in pointing the way, and it does not seem to me

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that a proposal to carry out symmetrically at a cost of two years additional work, a general plan already applied to five hundred out of a thousand counties, roughly speaking, can be said to raise any question of paternalism, or any suggestion of our doing for the South what the South must do for itself. The fact that we can stop where we are now with a certain amount of ground gained, which the South may be able to hold with its own resources, does not seem to me a stronger argument for stopping now than for stopping a year and a half or two years ago, when the same things could have been said. It is simply a question of degree. If it is true that a year and a half or two years of additional work can give to all the counties (excepting a few where the percentage of infection is very low) the same benefits that have accrued to the counties already covered, then it seems to me we have a valid argument for rounding out the work. There is not the slightest question, in view of the data we have concerning the stimulation of counties, as well as states, to a lively interest in hookworm eradication, that the rounding out of Mr. Rose's programme will be of large and lasting benefit of precisely the kind that has already been conferred in the region covered. At a time when we are seeking to know the best channels through which we can apply money for the improvement of public health, we see before us an unfinished work of a thoroughly demonstrated value, for the performance of which we have a highly skilled tool, which will otherwise to a great extent be thrown away.

What I hope is that at our next meeting Mr. Rose will be able to show to all of us that the work remaining to be done is of exactly the same

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kind, and is to be supported for exactly the same reasons as in the case of the work, let us say, of 1913 and 1914. If he fails to do that, let us wind things up on December 21.

Hoping that you have had a pleasant summer, and with kindest regards to Mrs. Gates and all your family, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Jerome D. Greene

Frederick T. Gates, Esq.,
Lake George Village,
Warren Co., N. Y.