

MEDICINE

# Health Officer Said to Have Had Mild Encephalitis Case

**T**HE FIRST case of encephalitis in one of the scientists fighting the epidemic in St. Louis appears to have been suffered by Dr. J. P. Leake, U. S. Public Health Service officer in charge of the investigations.

This attack was not incurred as a result of the experiment in which three of the scientists submitted to bites from mosquitoes that had previously fed on encephalitis patients. It is too early for results from this experiment planned to determine whether mosquitoes do carry the disease, as has been suspected from the fact that they transmit a similar disease of horses.

Dr. Leake himself pooh-poohs the idea that he had an attack, but his associates are convinced that he did. The attack occurred about a week ago while he was on his way to Washington, D. C., from St. Louis, Mo., to report on the situation to Surgeon-General Hugh S. Cumming. The attack was very mild, lasting about one day.

There have been many such attacks during this present epidemic. In fact, the men investigating the outbreak believe that there have been hundreds of such cases that have not been reported, simply because they were so mild that the sufferer did not realize himself that he had anything serious ailing him and failed to consult a physician. In these

cases, the attack consists of intense headache, nausea and vomiting. The patient feels very badly for several hours but by the end of a day has recovered.

This very mild type of case, among other things, has convinced the investigators that the disease which has been epidemic in St. Louis is not typical encephalitis as previously known and they are now calling it encephalitis B. Further indication that this is a new form of the disease is seen in the fact that there are absolutely no after-effects, which have been a serious feature of ordinary encephalitis. The patients who do not die in this epidemic recover entirely.

Names of the scientists who volunteered for encephalitis-infected mosquito bites have been withheld by the U. S. Public Health Service. This sort of service is considered merely part of the day's work by officers of the Service.

Meanwhile encouraging results are obtained from the efforts to establish the disease in monkeys. If this can be done the need for human guinea pigs will have been eliminated. Symptoms of the disease are now appearing in the second group of monkeys, inoculated with material from a group that developed the disease after inoculation from encephalitis patients.

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