

## MEDICINE

# Q Fever Poses Problem

Discovery of these disease germs in raw milk has added a new mystery to an already mysterious disease. But you don't get it from drinking milk.

► A NEW mystery has been added to that already mysterious disease, Q fever. The new mystery comes from the discovery of Q fever germs in raw milk. The discovery was made by Drs. R. J. Huebner, R. R. Parker and C. C. Shepard and Parasitologist W. L. Jellison of the U. S. Public Health Service and Dr. M. D. Beck of the California State Department of Public Health.

How the Q fever germs get into the milk and how they spread from the milk to humans make up the latest mystery.

You don't get Q fever from drinking milk, so far as the scientists can find. But, they say, there appears to be "a distinct possibility" that infected milk is a source of Q fever infection in man through some "as yet undetermined" way.

Q fever was first discovered among stock handlers in Queensland, Australia. That is where it gets its name, Q for Queensland. There have been outbreaks among stock handlers and packing house and stockyards workers in this country, and among laboratory workers. There was no suggestion that milk had anything to do with these outbreaks. Scientists thought it was most likely the germs spread through the air and were inhaled into the lungs.

In Los Angeles County last spring, however, Q fever attacked 17 persons and another 100 cases have since been reported in Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Orange Counties. More than half the patients lived near or worked in dairies. A fairly extensive survey showed that from one-tenth to one-fifth of the dairy cows in the Los Angeles area have antibodies for Q fever in their blood serum.

These findings led to extensive testing of milk from the cows of four dairies. The germs were found in milk from each of the dairies.

The cows apparently are not affected by the germs. They seemed to be healthy and some were among the best milk producers in the herds.

Pasteurized milk did not have Q fever germs in it after pasteurizing even when they had been in the milk before pasteurizing. So those who drink pas-

teurized milk need not worry about getting the disease from milk.

How you could get Q fever from milk without drinking it remains the mystery. The scientists are continuing to work on it.

*Science News Letter, February 21, 1948*

## BIOCHEMISTRY

## Biochemistry Fellowships Announced by Foundation

► FELLOWSHIPS for study toward Ph.D. degrees in fields of chemistry related to biological problems are available at the Biochemical Research Foundation at the University of Delaware at Newark.

The Foundation recently completed an investigation of the biological effects of irradiation for the atomic energy program and is continuing longer projects on basic problems of cellular growth.

Fellowships which are open to applicants holding M.S. degrees offer annual stipends of \$1,800.

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## PUBLIC HEALTH

## Pick New Surgeon General To Replace Retiring Head

► THE appointment of a new Surgeon General for the U. S. Public Health Service, Dr. Leonard A. Scheele, and the retirement of Dr. Thomas Parran when his term expires on April 6 corresponds to the periodic changes of Chief of Staff of the Army. The object of such changes is to provide opportunity for advancement of other officers in the service.

Dr. Parran might have been retired after his first term if the war had not been so close and Dr. Parran so involved in planning for the emergency that a change might have been unwise. His retirement now does not mean that he will retire from public health work. Instead he is likely to continue such service in an international field. His experience along such lines and his conviction that health is an international problem suggest that he may take an increasing part in the World Health Organization as that develops further. He is at present

and will continue as United States representative on WHO's interim commission.

Dr. Scheele, like Dr. Parran, is known to be a man of deep social consciousness. Born in Fort Wayne, Ind., on July 25, 1907, he did his undergraduate work at the University of Michigan and received his medical degree from Wayne University, Detroit, in 1934. Immediately after he was appointed to the regular commissioned corps of the U. S. Public Health Service. After the usual tours of duty as quarantine officer and in public health administrative work, he spent two years as special fellow in cancer research at Memorial Hospital, New York, and has since devoted himself to cancer control except for special assignments on war duty. These included organizing field casualty work for the Office of Civilian Defense and duty in Sicily, Italy, London and Germany, the last on the Allied Control Council under General Lucius Clay. Since the war he has served as assistant chief and since last July as director of the National Cancer Institute.

His appointment as Surgeon General, if confirmed by the Senate, is not expected to bring any immediate or drastic changes in Public Health Service policies or activities. His association with cancer research and control activities does not mean that he is uninterested in other phases of public health work and he is known as an able administrator.

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**APPOINT NEW HEAD** — Dr. Leonard A. Scheele will be the new Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service, when the Senate confirms his appointment.