

Obituary Notice

LESLIE ALFRED ALLEN, 1903–1964

With the death of L. A. Allen, D.Sc., Ph.D., D.I.C., F.R.I.C., F.I.Biol., on 30 December 1964 microbiology in general suffered a grievous loss, and the Society for General Microbiology in particular has cause to regret the death of an ex-officer who assisted so much in its formative years.

Leslie Alfred Allen was born in 1903 and received his education at Portsmouth Grammar School and the University of Reading, graduating with First Class Honours in Chemistry in 1925. He did postgraduate work at various places, including Imperial College, London, in Northern Ireland, at the Hannah Dairy Research Institute in Scotland, and at the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield. At these various research stations his investigations ranged from animal feeding-stuffs to milk, his work becoming more and more microbiological, particularly in relation to dairy products. He was for some nine years lecturer at Reading University, being appointed to an Independent Lecturership in Agricultural Bacteriology from September 1930. From this post he resigned in September 1939, being appointed to the staff of the Water Pollution Research Laboratory of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, then at Watford. There, as Chief Microbiologist, he was engaged for the next fourteen years on various aspects of water bacteriology, covering water treatment, sewage and trade wastes.

In 1953 Allen left the Government's scientific service and joined the Research Department of Messrs Tate and Lyle to take charge of a unit investigating certain aspects of molasses utilization, particularly the production in this country of a food yeast. At this time I was closely associated with Allen in this work and can testify to the efficient operation of the team under his leadership. Much valuable work was done and any results emanating from the unit were invariably reliable. Any work which Allen undertook could be counted upon as having been performed most conscientiously, for he was absolutely meticulous.

He was the author of well over 60 papers and contributions containing much original work. In the last few years Allen had become a consultant in microbiology, particularly in relation to hygiene, water and effluents. He was External Examiner in biology to Brunel College, about to become a university.

The Society for General Microbiology owed more, in its inception, to Allen and to Ralph St John-Brooks than to any other men. In the dark days of the Second World War Allen was President of the (then) Society of Agricultural Bacteriologists and the idea of a Society to cover all the various disciplines of microbiology was in the air; but progress had to be cautious if the good will of all those in the different branches of the science was to be achieved. This Allen and St John-Brooks by their meetings and talks were able to do, so that when the time came to enlist the support and foster the necessary enthusiasm among a wide range of microbiologists, their careful ground-work yielded good fruit. In the earliest days of the Society, Allen and the present writer concurrently held various offices in three microbiological associations—the Society for General Microbiology, the Society for Applied Bac-

teriology (as it subsequently metamorphosed from the Society for Agricultural Bacteriology) and the Microbiology Group of the Society of Chemical Industry (formerly the Microbiology Panel of the Food Group of that Society). Our activities in these three organizations brought us almost daily into close association and I would claim to be as entitled as anyone to appreciate the steadfastness of Allen's character and his unremitting efforts on behalf of any cause he took up. Actually he had a somewhat shy manner but was natural and easy to work with: he would never exploit a situation at the expense of his colleagues or acquaintances for the purpose of his personal advancement. He was a kind man and is now sadly missed by his many friends who so admired his character. His widow and two daughters have our sympathy in their loss.

H. J. BUNKER



LESLIE ALFRED ALLEN

(Facing p. 170)