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Special Articles

SHALL WE HAVE PURE MILK IN CANADA

By J. H. ELLIOTT, M.B.

SECRETARY CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION MILK COMMISSION—ASSOCIATE IN
MEDICINE AND CLINICAL MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO—SENIOR
ASSISTANT PHYSICIAN ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL, TORONTO.

Of the various foods in general use there is none perhaps so universally used in every family and by every individual as milk. There is none which from its composition can be of such universal service to the sick and well of all ages. Containing all the essentials of a perfect food, requiring little or no preparation before serving, comparatively easy of digestion, it has its place as one of the very important articles of diet for the sick and convalescent.

Milk fresh from the udder of a healthy cow is almost sterile, and as such is a most excellent article of diet for either the sick or well. But this cannot be said of market milk, 12 to 48 hours old, which has received no special care. It is such an excellent medium for the growth of micro-organisms that from containing a few bacteria per c.c. when milked from the udder, it is not unusual for the count to increase enormously when handled carelessly. Examination of samples of

milk delivered to houses and hospitals in St. Petersburg, London, New York, Washington, Toronto and other cities, have shown the presence of millions of bacteria per cubic centimetre, in some an average of over 22,000,000, and a maximum of over 307,000,000 per cubic centimetre. Fortunately most of these organisms are saprophytic and not concerned in the production of disease unless through their toxins. Yet many diseases are conveyed by milk, and epidemics running into many hundreds have been directly traced to a contaminated milk supply. The principal diseases carried by milk are typhoid, scarlet fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis and infantile diarrhoea. That the first three are not infrequently milk borne is amply demonstrated by the study of numerous epidemics traced definitely to the existence of a case of one of these fevers in the person or household of one handling milk after