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## Thirty-five Montreal scientists moving to Winnipeg

By MANFRED JAGER  
Tribune Medical Reporter

A team of 35 scientists is packing bags in Montreal and moving to Winnipeg to establish an immunology department — the first, giant step toward transplant surgery in Manitoba.

They are moving because of "university politics" at McGill University.

The department's quarters, adjacent to the Manitoba medical and dental school complex

on McDermot Ave., are being completed and the head of the new department says the team will begin work here early next month.

He is Dr. Alec Sehon, 44, a native of Rumania with a Ph.D. degree in physical chemistry from Manchester, England, who has lived in Canada since 1952. Until this summer Dr. Sehon was professor of chemistry at McGill University. He is also president of the Canadian Society for Immunology.

Coming to the University of

Manitoba with the Sehon team of professors, research scientists, post-graduate Ph.D. students and research fellows are:

- About \$400,000 worth of ultra-modern scientific research equipment, in part released to the team by McGill University and partly contributed by the Medical Research Council of Canada.

- An annual \$200,000 in national and international grants for investigation projects either underway now or anticipated for the near future.

The move will rank among the most important developments in Manitoba medical history. Its work will take the province a step toward becoming a centre for organ-transplant surgery. It is the first such team established in Western Canada.

Dr. Sehon said his department, through the grant structure supporting the work of individual scientists, will be largely self-sufficient.

Only the salaries of some of the six professors of the depart-

ment plus clerical pay will actually be borne by the university.

The team's move to Manitoba and into its spanking new \$250,000 building was triggered by what Dr. Sehon called "university politics, as distinguished from university policy" regarding immunology work at McGill.

At stake was the continuation of the team as it exists now with its own department as a separate entity in university life.

Dr. Sehon said the group's move to Winnipeg has nothing to do with trends to make Mc-

Gill a French-speaking institution.

"We all speak French as well as English and most of us recently conducted a summer school course in immunology at Laval University in Quebec City which was held in French throughout," the professor said.

He added that the internal political problems at McGill which triggered his team's move here were partly and indirectly due to eastern student unrest.

"The people who make the plans and decisions about aca-

demical matters have had to expend their energies on student unrest and can't come to grips with some of the more important scientific developments such as the challenges facing us in immunology.

"The academic climate in Winnipeg is excellent by comparison."

In the past, immunology was mostly combined with teaching and research in bacteriology.

Immunology is a biological science that deals with the gen-

See SCIENTISTS, Page 2

One victim, who was a visitor in Winnipeg, was found by po-

St. Clement area from a person who collects skunks, de-scents

bitten most were in their mid-20s. The youngest was 17.

on busine for the N

### Scientists moving to city

eral response of the body to intrusion of foreign bodies such as bacteria, viruses, pollens and cells such as in organ transplants.

The advent of transplant surgery brought immunology into its own through the need to investigate man's immune reaction to new organs and the problems of overcoming the rejection mechanism.

"The trend was toward immunology had to emerge as a new discipline.

"But investigators don't grow on trees, so everybody today is after them and we were faced with the danger of being split apart by all kinds of places hiring our members.

"The University of Manitoba and its dean, Dr. T. W. Fyles, had the foresight and initiative to establish a separate immunology department with its own administration structure."

First contacts between the Sehon group and the U of M were made a year ago last April. The talks led to principal agreement three months later and the Manitobans started

#### From Page One

building the 7,200-sq. ft. quarters for the team earlier this year.

Dr. Sehon moved to Winnipeg early last month. His colleagues will arrive here within the next two or three weeks.

The team include internationally known surgeons, biologists, chemists, anatomists, geneticists as well as immunologists headed by Dr. Sehon himself.

"What we are bringing here is a well-integrated and co-ordinated unit of established investigators plus a group of 20 post-graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from all over the world."

Countries represented in the team include Australia, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Britain, Switzerland, Greece, Korea, Rumania and the U.S., although many of the doctors have become permanent residents or citizens of this country.

"We are working to understand the basic mechanisms underlying the immune response as manifested either in the production of protective antibodies in relation to infectious diseases, or harmful antibodies produced by allergic individuals which are responsible for their inflammatory reactions such as in hay-fever, asthma and food and drug allergies.

"We also study the mechanisms related to the rejection of grafts and cancer cells, which have obviously some features foreign to the host organisms," Dr. Sehon explained.

It is the latter area of research that will help propel medicine here into the field of organ transplantation, probably involving kidney grafts at first.

"We will not be a clinical department ourselves, but act as a training centre for transplant

teams and would collaborate in the establishment of a program leading to the application of actual transplant practice," Dr. Sehon said.

Main function of the Sehon group will be teaching and research.

Commenting on the move Dean Fyles said today: "This makes us very proud and happy and will do a lot for the school and the medical community here.

"Dr. Sehon and his associates could have gone to any number of places who would have loved to have him. By coming to Winnipeg, he made it possible for us to have the first immunology department of any Canadian university."

The immunologist has obtained a \$20,000 grant from the scientific bureau of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels to hold a two-week workshop on immunology in Manitoba next summer.

The session will be held at a holiday resort hotel and Dr. Sehon considers it a provincial centennial project of his own.

Speakers to the July 5 to 17 conference will come from England, France, Denmark, Israel, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Australia, the U.S. and Canada. About 100 scientists will attend.

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Mr. Pa

#### Continued From Page

### Plan for no

After stopping at Churchill, the four DC-3 planes flew south again to Gillam for briefings by Manitoba Hydro officials about the Nelson River hydro-electric project.

The tour — arranged by the department of industry and commerce — left Winnipeg this morning and returns early Sat-

companies And he sa

"My de very close of the su which ma opportunit gation."

Other po ing Chud