DON'T RELAX PRECAUTIONS SAYS HASSLER

Record Established by City in Stamping Out Disease Unless Relapse Occurs

562 CASES YESTERDAY

Fatal Mistake of Growing Careless Too Soon Shown in Eastern Cities

WITHIN less than a month after the influenza contagion began to spread in this city, the health authorities have it on the down grade. If the precautions now being taken are continued, said the Health Officer, William C. Hassler yesterday, the chances are excellent that San Francisco will break all records in getting rid of the epidemic.

But he gave a warning with the example of the most of the Eastern cities that have had the influenza. In almost every case after the contagion had begun to wane, it burst out fresh and became worse than ever. This, he said, was due to overconfidence and relaxation of measures against the epidemic.

SITUATION BRIGHTENING

In almost all respects the situation was better yesterday, although the deaths from influenza still kept up to a high figure. The number of cases reported during the twenty-four hours was 562, of which 124 were actually of the day. This was a heavy drop from the 356 cases reported on Thursday.

The number of pneumonia cases taken to the hospitals rose a little on Thursday, when only seventy-eight cases were handled, but this was explained by Dr. Hassler as due to the fact that one hospital room had made it possible to take less serious cases than were admitted during the epidemic. Thursday's record of seventy-eight cases handled by the emergency service was a drop from 133 on the previous day. It was noticed that the Central Emergency Hospital yesterday that for the first time since the epidemic became serious, a single case walked into the hospital yesterday many homeless men came in suffering from pneumonia.

RED CROSS UNIT OPEN

With the opening of the Red Cross building at the Civic Center the hospital situation became very much improved yesterday. The Red Cross building is now used exclusively for convalescents. Thither all convalescents are being taken from the San Francisco Hospital, leaving that institution much freer to handle new cases.

As the numbers reduce, said the Health Officer, the San Francisco Hospital will be able to take less serious cases, and due to this he will be able to treat them earlier. During the critical period, when every bit of room in the hospital was crowded, it was possible, he said, to take in only the greater cases.

The death list yesterday from influenza was 98. According to the Health Officer, the average time in which death occurs in a typical case of influenza is five days from the time the patient came down. It was pointed out that the number of pneumonia patients admitted to the Central Emergency Hospital reached its maximum on Sunday and was still high on Wednesday, so that a heavy death list is to be expected for two or three days yet.

TOTAL HURE, 20,208

The grand total of influenza cases in San Francisco now has reached 20,208, and the toll of deaths is 1165. The history of the epidemic is San Francisco shows that as far as is known the first case in the city on October 1, that on October 8 it was suddenly discovered that there were 200 cases. The number rose then until on October 22 1500 cases were reported for the day. On that day the mask ordinance was passed and masks had been worn generally.

But the waning of the mask and the beginning to have its effect, and in one day the new cases fell off to 1500, reported on October 22. On October 31 the mask ordinance had been for the twenty-four hours, and on November 1 it had dropped to 662.

"Keep on wearing the masks," said Dr. Hassler yesterday, "and we will soon be rid of it. I regard 600 cases a day as the half-tide. Above that point the spread of the epidemic is too great. Below it, the reduction of the epidemic, should be speedy if all precautions are kept up."

The distribution of the Leroy vaccine by the Health Office continues as fast as supplies come in. So far about 50,000 cubic centimeters of the vaccine have been distributed in this city, and judging from the persistence of the demand, the Health Officer assumes that it has all been used. This means that about 15,000 persons have received the prophylactic injections, or probably many more, considering that a large number of people have received three doses. The Central Emergency Hospital alone administered more than 1500 doses in twenty-four hours yesterday.