MASK WEARING ORDER GOES AS EPIDEMIC DIES

Mayor Nullifies Ordinance Following Special Health Board Meeting

Following a special meeting of the Board of Health held yesterday, at which it was decided that the influenza flare-up had subsided to such an extent that the people might safely be permitted to unmask, the Mayor issued a proclamation nullifying the mask ordinance, as follows:

"In accordance with the provisions of Ordinance No. 4758, passed by the Board of Supervisors on December 21, 1918, the people of San Francisco have been wearing gauze masks as a means of combating the then prevalent epidemic of Spanish Influenza." The Board of Public Health having this day determined that said epidemic has ceased to exist, I, as Mayor, acting upon such information from the Board of Health, do hereby declare the wearing of the mask to have ceased and by this proclamation hereby nullify said Ordinance No. 4758. It has been required that masks be worn.

The Board of Health intended to meet tomorrow night for a further consideration of the subject. But as the report indicates a decrease in the number of cases, a meeting was held yesterday and the decision reached. A bulletin of the foregoing meeting was immediately printed by the Chronicle and the masks quickly disappeared.

In commenting on the course the Board of Health has taken in the matter, President Arthur H. Freer said that the Board had been as eager to recommend unmasking when it should be safe, as it had been for the adoption of the mask ordinance. It added that it did not feel that any attempt could be made to annul the mask for the obvious reason that the question is one of public health and not of the individual.

As it was possible to demonstrate that the mask is an effective preventive of the disease, that demonstration has been made. Further, more, from the public interest, it is against the mask not one has come forward with any suggestion of a substitute for the mask or any other means of further combating the disease. The Board of Health therefore did the only thing it could do — it used the means which appear to be most effective, which have been approved by both medical authorities and the general adoption of the mask is the best indication of their approval."