

October 23, 1918.

Dear Admiral Fullam:-

Your letter enclosing correspondence including the timely warning to all vessels and stations on the Pacific Coast with reference to the pandemic of influenza has been received, and the reports of various precautionary and preventive measures which were adopted have been read with interest and will be disseminated for the information of medical officers of the Service.

It is noted that outbreaks of influenza have already occurred in the Fleet and at most of the stations on the Pacific Coast, in spite of preventive measures as was to be expected of this disease.

In regard to uniform restrictions the Bureau is of opinion that the wearing of jerseys or sweaters as outer garments or between the jumper and underwear, when clean, is a matter of minor consideration from the hygienic viewpoint, and an endorsement to this effect has been written for the Navy Department.

The Bureau believes that a medical officer should not be subjected to disciplinary action as intimated by your reference to the promotion of officers by selection, for stating in official sanitary reports the results of his observations and expressing opinion regarding the clothing worn by the men, because the Navy Regulations clearly contemplate that the medical officer of a shore station, under the direction of the Commandant, shall supervise the hygiene of the station and recommend such measures as he may deem necessary to prevent or diminish disease, and that he shall report in writing to the Commandant the conditions, including the clothing and habits of the men together with such recommendations as he may deem proper. The Commanding Officer and the higher authorities through whom such reports are forwarded have an opportunity to endorse their approval or disapproval of such recommendations, prior to final action by the Navy Department.

It is believed that Commander Rossiter in expressing an opinion contrary to your own did so with no other thought but the best interests of the personnel from the health viewpoint and to prevent if possible the development of respiratory diseases which have long been peculiar in the Yerba Buena locality.

Very truly yours,

W. C. Braisted.

(M. & S. Files)

Surgeon General US Navy.

Admiral W. F. Fullam, U.S.N.
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