

JUDGE BLACK DISCUSSES SERIOUSNESS OF THE FLU EPIDEMIC OVER COUNTRY

Mr. C. E. Adams, Editor Press.

My Dear Mr. Adams:

A day or two ago we had to some extent discuss the influenza situation in western Colorado. You asked me to write something for publication which is my only excuse for this letter. What is said is not intended to apply to any particular locality, but to Colorado generally.

We are in the midst of the most frightful epidemic that has ever visited the world. Death is on every side, and lays its hand upon the rich, the poor, the young, the old. Doctors and undertakers drive madly thru our roads and streets, not dividing day from night or Sunday from the week, so desperate are conditions. Deaths are increasing, hospitals are multiplying, men can scarcely provide coffins and dig graves.

The local papers give columns to the statement of the news of the sick, the dead, the dying, and, with studied pains, tell what undertaker has charge, who preaches the sermon, and almost in the same breath, where wedding rings may be had.

Schools, churches, lodge rooms, pool halls, and similar places are wide open, funerals are largely attended without restriction, everyone being allowed to go.

Members of a family in which the dread disease has appeared, are permitted to mingle freely with the public, visit the postoffice and other public places, so long as they are able to walk. Nurses go freely and without restraint from the sick room thru the crowded streets and mingle with the people, and no one says them nay.

Members of families who are not stricken watch those who are and at the same time go freely among well people. Those convalescing frequently are on the streets before they are able to walk without a cane.

Some boards of health are trying to do something to check the spread of the disease; others make suggestions but do not enforce them; and some take the position that the disease is one that must run its course and that attempted quarantines are more than useless.

Some tell us that business must not be interfered with, no matter what the toll of death.

If conditions continue long as they now are in some communities, there will be few business men left.

Does anything above stated apply to Montrose? What are we doing here to stamp out this dread disease?

You often hear it said that one who

has no temperature can not communicate the disease, but frequently a temperature exists before the person who has it knows of its existence. Some times it manifests itself to others before it does to the victim. Frequently people with temperature, who are in ignorance of the fact, all picked up by persons or physicians and taken to hospitals. We have had experience enough to know that those who have been exposed are the most likely to take it, and to communicate it. All such should be placed in detention until the danger is passed.

We should know by this time that crowds are dangerous.

When influenza appears in a family, it is not unusual for all the members to be stricken in rapid succession. In one instance in the Uncompahgre valley, nine in a family of ten were taken within twentyfour hours. The fact that occasionally doctors, nurses and members of families attending influenza patients escape, is no reason for throwing caution to the winds. If you meet a fool on the road in an auto and in some unaccountable manner escape wreck or injury, you would hardly feel justified in advising your friends that there was no danger attending the meeting of such a person.

We should have learned by this time that if you live in the same house, go into the sick room, breathe the same air with an influenza patient, you should not be permitted to mingle with the public. To be allowed to do so under such circumstances is almost inconceivable.

The people seem to be slow to realize the awfulness of the situation, the need for caution. It seems so easy to bear our present ills, except for those who have them.

The health authorities should see to it that when influenza appears in a family, those not sick should immediately be put in detention until danger of spreading is over, that if they remain in the same house, they should be completely barred from the public. There should be no want of vigilance, no laxity, no trifling. All should be made to conform to what is so essential to the public good.

If a community badly afflicted does not resort to stringent measures to afford protection, it's only a question of a short time if we may judge from present conditions in some communities, until there will be no one left to protect.

THEOPHILUS J. BLACK.