

# CITY SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED BY GRIP FIGHTERS

Maj. W. H. Davis Orders Shutdown After Conference With Officials.

## EPIDEMIC RAGING

Many New Cases Reported and Number of Deaths is Increased.

## BOROUGHIS TO FIGHT

The public schools of Pittsburgh will be closed today on account of the epidemic of influenza. This conclusion was reached yesterday afternoon at a conference held by Health Director W. H. Davis with the heads of the principal bureaus of his department in which the superintendent of schools and the director of school hygiene participated.

The pupils and teachers will assemble this morning, but there will be no lessons. The children will be instructed in personal hygiene and preventative measures.

The principal points of the instructions to be given are contained in the order issued by Director Davis to Superintendent of Schools William M. Davidson after the conference. The order reads as follows:

After the conference at which the Department of Public Health and the school officials were represented, I have concluded that it would be wise to direct you to close the public schools of the city. I will issue a like order to the management of all parochial and private schools of Pittsburgh.

The closest possible analysis was made of the best figures obtainable in reference to conditions in the schools. There has been a very great increase in the number of absences in the last two days. This appears to be very largely due to the fears of the parents, as the figures do not indicate a larger percentage of sickness among children than would be expected from their proportion of the population. It is reasonable to expect that this absenteeism will increase until the feeling of fear has grown less.

## Supervision Is Difficult.

Under these circumstances it is not possible to maintain through the schools the medical supervision that would have been possible had the attendance remained at standard. This removes the only reason for keeping the schools open and, as stated above, I have reached the conclusion that it would be advisable to close them at this time. You are therefore hereby ordered to close the public schools and keep the same closed until this department shall order otherwise.

In this connection may I request that you transmit to the heads of your schools this further order for me, touching upon the conduct of children who will now be under the immediate control of their parents throughout the entire day? The order is this: That children are to be kept off street cars, except under the most urgent circumstances; that they are to be kept off the streets and on their own premises as far as possible; that they are not to be permitted to gather in groups for play or other purposes; that they are not to visit where sickness is known to exist. I am

Continued on Page Seven, Column Four

# City Schools Are Closed by Grip Fighters

Continued from First Page.

asking this to further check the spread of the disease.

## New Cases Increase.

There was a decided increase in the spread of the epidemic yesterday, as indicated by the report to the health department of new cases and deaths. New cases of influenza numbered 1,057, making a total of 10,735 up to date. There were 69 new cases of pneumonia, making a total during the epidemic of 84. The period covered is for 24 hours from 4 o'clock Tuesday to 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon. The deaths from 4 p. m. Tuesday to last midnight numbered 194, of which 77 were from pneumonia, 99 from influenza and pneumonia combined, and 18 from influenza.

Director Davis yesterday morning met a committee of members of the Allegheny County Medical Society and again discussed the question of a general inoculation with anti-influenza serum without coming to any conclusion. Residents of Swissvale are being generally inoculated, the health authorities and the health board cooperating in the matter. A statement respecting the use of serum was issued yesterday by Edward A. Woods, chairman of the civilian relief committee department of the Red Cross. The Red Cross is aiding in distributing the serum. Mr. Woods said:

In using its facilities to increase the supply of serum for inoculations against influenza, the Red Cross wishes it clearly understood that it does not undertake to prove its efficacy as a preventative of influenza, and by no means to suggest that in taking the inoculation any and all means to guard against it should not be observed.

## Serum Not Indorsed.

It is adding to increase the supply of this serum, as it will in helping to furnish any other drug or means that may be used by the medical fraternities and all organizations to help abate the epidemic, and to help meet the enormous demand imposed by the large number of sick. Firms and individuals must rely upon their own sources of information as to its use.

The Red Cross has offered, under the advice of Dr. Clement H. Jones, head of its medical committee, this serum to all its own workers in its central office; and the fact that many of the larger firms of the city have for 16 days been using it, and that it has been used in the training camps here and elsewhere has been general, is encouraging, but must not be accepted as by any means conclusive proof that this is an effective preventive.

## Millvale Schools Closed.

Following a meeting held in the Millvale Municipal Building of the Millvale Board of Health and the school board it was decided to close the school buildings on account of the low attendance. Seven teachers are ill.

Twenty-five cases of influenza in Hays and 20 in Homestead were reported to the health authorities within 24 hours. More than 200 cases of the disease have developed in Hays. Homestead's emergency hospital, at Eighth avenue and Sarah street, is taxed to capacity, 40 victims of the disease being confined there. The Homestead Health Board is planning to open at least two other emergency hospitals.

## Hospital to Open.

Members of the Board of Health of Etna and the Borough Council held a joint meeting last night and discussed plans for combating the Spanish influenza epidemic. The plan of Sharpsburg health authorities to take over a laborers' barracks in Etna, across the line from Sharpsburg, as an emergency hospital, was brought up at the meeting. Residents of Etna in the vicinity of the barracks, which was erected by the United States Steel Corporation, had protested against the use of the building by Sharpsburg as a hospital.

Grant E. Carson, secretary of the Etna Board of Health, stated that the health board or other borough officials have no intention of interfering with the proposed plans for an emergency hospital. It was announced that if the disease spreads in Etna the Cronian Hall, on Bridge street, Etna, will be used as an emergency hospital.

The barracks to be used by the Sharpsburg authorities will be opened this morning. Mrs. Joseph Nagle, a trained nurse of Sharpsburg, will have charge and seven Red Cross workers of Sharpsburg have volunteered their services. There are 30 beds in the barracks.