

BABCOCK AND ROYER CONFER ON EPIDEMIC

State Health Commissioner Appeals to War Work Heads to Fight Rule Changes.

REPORT SHOWS DECREASE.

Mayor E. V. Babcock left Pittsburgh last night to go into conference today with Dr. B. Franklin, state commissioner of health, on the question of modifying or removing the epidemic restrictions now in force in the city.

At the same time Dr. Royer transmitted his telegram of yesterday to the mayor, in which he refused to consider a modification of the restrictions, by a call to the heads of all the mines and the presidents of large war manufactories in Pennsylvania, to oppose modifications of the influenza rules, in the interests of public health and war production.

Meanwhile, word from Harrisburg indicated that Dr. Royer intends to maintain his position, despite anything the mayor may say, and Governor Brumbaugh is quoted as saying: "We are here to protect the health of the public, and we intend to do it."

Influenza cases reported in the period between 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon and 10 o'clock this morning total 68, the bureau of infectious diseases announced this morning, showing a further falling off in new cases. Fewer new cases of pneumonia were reported, the number being 20. To date 11,824 influenza cases and 12,027 pneumonia cases have been reported.

Although deaths were somewhat higher than usual, it is accounted for by the fact that many of those which occurred Sunday were not reported until yesterday. From 4 o'clock yesterday to 10 o'clock this morning, 12 deaths from influenza were reported, 23 from pneumonia and 41 from mixed causes.

DR. ROYER'S LETTER.

Dr. Royer's letter reads:

"We are trying to enforce rigidly a drastic order prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages and restricting crowds of discontinuing moving picture shows, theaters and meetings of all sorts in an effort to minimize the loss of life and loss of man-power during this influenza epidemic. This is in strict conformity with what has been done in New England states, in New Jersey and many parts of New York state and Delaware, and is fully approved by the various Federal services, army, navy and public health.

"The organized liquor interests and the moving picture and theater interests, and I am sorry to say in a few instances misguided clergymen are beginning to oppose further enforcement of this order. The mayor of Pittsburgh is apparently getting very restless.

"It is now time that you, as a head of a great corporation engaged in war industries, anxious to protect your employees and anxious to do your patriotic duty in getting out what is essential for the boys on the other side, speak how plainly and strong through the press to these liquor interests, to the theater interests, and to the executive officer of this department."

The fight against the epidemic continues with unabated vigor in city and county. Health authorities believe that the appreciable reduction in number of new cases shown by most recent figures indicate that the crest of the influenza wave is past, and that, should the recent reduction continue in future reports, the end of the epidemic will soon be in sight.

Council yesterday passed an ordinance appropriating \$50,000 to be used in the fight. The county commissioners, at a meeting with state health department officials, and borough and township officials, decided to proceed with their program of emergency hospital construction; the state officials to recommend districts in need of aid; and Dr. Adolph Koenig of the state medical advisory board to judge all claims, assistance and issue requisitions for needed money. Dr. E. Robert Weise is to be sent on a survey of the county at once.

The accustomed street celebrations of Halloween in Pittsburgh are expected to be eliminated this year, because of the state health department's order forbidding public gatherings and parades. According to the city health officials, the matter is under the jurisdiction of the public safety department. Safety Director Charles B. Prichard has made no ruling, as yet, but has pronounced the throwing of confetti and the gathering of crowds an undoubted help to the spread of influenza. The decision is to be left to Mayor Babcock. City officials say they are sure no celebration will be allowed.

MAIL SERVICE HIT.

More than 60 trained clerks of the central Pittsburgh postoffice and its branches are off duty because of influenza, according to a report made today by Superintendent of Mail's I. G. Hart. Distribution, according to Mr. Hart, is being seriously interfered with by the disease, in some cases the illness of carriers having reduced the deliveries of mail to one daily.

The United States marine hospital here, which has been used as a research laboratory, will be reopened as an emergency influenza hospital, within a short time, with a capacity of from 20 to 60 beds. Major James B. Stoner, formerly of Pittsburgh, has returned to take charge. One-half the capacity of the new hospital is to be filled from St. Francis Hospital. Army and navy men, Federal employes and merchant seamen are to be cared for.

W. R. Batt, state registrar of vital statistics, is in the city conferring with city and county health authorities, and is expected to report to Dr. Royer upon conditions here. State authorities yesterday sent Dr. C. R. Wilfer to McKeesport and Dr. Royd M. Jewther of Vandergrift to Elizabeth, where he will relieve Dr. J. W. Worrell. Dr. J. C. Burt of Pittsburgh was sent to Natrona, where the situation was reported serious, with not a physician in the town.

The civilian relief department of the Red Cross sent five tanks of oxygen to the emergency hospital in Johnston. The executive committee of the Pittsburgh chapter discussed the progress of the epidemic at a meeting at which E. A. Woods, head of the influenza committee, reported the distribution of serum for 15,000 injections, with demands for 25,000 additional injections.