

Papers of Mayor James Rolph

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16-10

October 23, 1918.

To the  
Honorable Board of Supervisors  
of the City and County of San Francisco:

Gentlemen:

A very gracious thing has been done by His Honor Mayor Andrew J. Peters, of Boston, and by Dr. Timothy Leary, head of the Leary Laboratories of Tufts Medical College, and I am asking you to join with me in expressing the City's thanks for this courtesy.

In the fight against influenza, vaccination with a vaccine produced in Dr. Leary's laboratories and now about to be produced in limited quantities here, has proven itself vitally useful.

Our Board of Health, anxious to possess this remedy at the earliest possible moment, and in large quantities, called upon me to seek the assistance of the Mayor of Boston.

I telegraphed him, asking him to help us obtain some share of the output of the vaccine, and received an immediate reply pledging assistance.

This morning I received a telegram from Dr. Leary as follows:

"Fifty thousand C.C. vaccine ready for shipment, with approval State Department of Health. Fear delay by express, asking Mayor Waters to furnish messenger to accompany."

This was almost immediately followed by another message, saying,

"Edwin Moore, Mayor's Secretary leaving Twentieth Century, with fifty thousand C.C. vaccine."

Mayor Peters wires:

"Messenger left Boston to-day, Twentieth Century, for San Francisco, carrying fifty thousand cubic centimeters Dr. Leary's serum, sufficient for seventeen thousand complete prophylactic inoculations. Representative travels from Chicago via Northwestern Railroad,

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Hon. Board of Supervisors, ---2.

October 23, 1918.

**"Its word to the public is 'WEAR MASKS.'**

**"As Mayor, I request every man, woman and child in San Francisco to take this advice of the health authorities.**

**"Wear these masks and save your lives and those of your children and your neighbors.**

**"The Italian Supreme Command has printed on every gas mask, 'Who leaves this mask behind, dies.' You run that chance if you fail your city now and do not wear a mask.**

**"Masks may prevent half of more of the sickness and death with which we are confronted. Every mask will cut down our possible total of 50,000 cases and 1,500 deaths.**

**"This proclamation has the concurrence of the Board of Public Health, the Red Cross, the State Council of Defense, Organized Labor, Organized Associations of Merchants, charitable organizations and other public bodies.**

**"Conscience, patriotism and self-protection demand immediate and rigid compliance."**

On Tuesday, October 22nd, Rear Admiral J.L. Jayne, Commandant of the Twelfth Naval District, called upon me, and, in a spirit of most admirable cooperation with the City's efforts to check the epidemic, issued an order that all personnel of the Twelfth Naval District wear masks in accordance with the proclamation above quoted.

Similar action was promptly taken by Brigadier J.F. Morrison, whose cooperation is to be counted upon throughout this emergency.

In response, a large percentage of the civil population at once began the wearing of masks. Soldiers and Sailors are wearing them in accordance with orders of their Commanders and for their own protection and the safety of others.

It must be noted, with regret, that there are some among the civil population, who, through failure to realize the seriousness of the menacing disease, or possibly through captiousness or disregard of the public health, have not complied with the often published directions of the health authorities.

Conditions in San Francisco at this time admit of no trifling or delays in the application of either preventive measures or means of treatment.

If our Soldiers and Sailors, and practically the whole civil population are in masks, the emergency demands action upon the part of the city authorities to compel those who have not voluntarily complied with this regulation to do so at once.

Following a conference with the health authorities,

Hon. Board of Supervisors,---3.

October 23, 1918.

I called you together in this special session, and respectfully request you, upon the grounds above stated, to initiate an ordinance at this time calling for the wearing of masks by all persons in this city.

For your information I beg to add that every possible means known to the authorities is being used in an endeavor to check the spread of this epidemic of influenza, and to save the lives of those already stricken. I know that you will cooperate in every way that you can in this situation and have informed the health authorities that the City Government will go to the limit of its means to do all that is necessary to safeguard the public.

Respectfully,

(SGD) JAMES ROLPH, JR.

Mayer.

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