

Papers of Mayor James Rolph

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October 31st, 1918.

Mr. E.G. Anderson,  
Sales Manager,  
American Bronze Corporation,  
Berwyn, Pennsylvania.

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am in receipt of your kind letter of October 26th concerning your experience with Spanish Influenza, and I am indeed deeply grateful for the friendly spirit that prompted your giving me these facts.

Masks were not worn in San Francisco at the outbreak of the epidemic. They were strongly advocated, however, and, notwithstanding some hesitation, the idea was adopted. The day masks were put on generally by the public, 2,020 new cases of Influenza were reported for the day and the number of new cases had been growing in an appalling manner. Ever since the masks were adopted, it has been apparent that the peak of the epidemic was passed and it is now our confident hope that we are on the down grade. For instance, yesterday only 1,100 odd new cases were reported and 800 of these were delayed reports of previous days' cases.

In addition to the wearing of masks, which all but a very few of our people have adopted cheerfully, we are administering antitoxin which our Board of Health informs me is the same of which you speak. The City of Boston sent us enough Leary vaccine to inoculate 17,000 persons, and we have also the Mayo vaccine as well as vaccine prepared in local laboratories and at the University of California. Our Health authorities and local Physicians generally seem to have complete faith in the efficacy of this antitoxin, but its administration has not proceeded sufficiently far to enable us to state exactly its effects.

I am taking the liberty of making your letter public for the good of those who may be hesitating as to whether or not they will take advantage of this inoculation. A report from the Board of Health, this morning, shows that there was 103 deaths from Pneumonia here yesterday, which is lower than all previous days. We have had a total of 18,706 cases of the Influenza, of which only 4,771 are reported as active at this time. There have been 976 deaths so far, traceable directly to Influenza or the resulting Influenza-Pneumonia.

Mr. E.G. Anderson,-----2.

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Our Hospital facilities have been taxed, but, by reason of having one of the finest City and County Hospitals in the world, we have been able to take care of every patient, and truly noble work has been done by our Health authorities, by the American Red Cross, by volunteers from the Army and Navy, and by private citizens who have come forward by the thousands to help.

I am giving you this information as of interest to you and in the same spirit in which you write, and I thank you again for taking the trouble to write.

I recall, with pleasure, our meeting at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, and I send my very kindest personal regards.

Very sincerely yours,

Mayor.

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