

Papers of Mayor James Rolph

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16-10

Charge Mayor's Office,
San Francisco, October 31, 1918.

HON. HARVEY NEILSON,
MAYOR'S OFFICE, SANTA BARBARA, CAL.

STRONGLY URGE UNIVERSAL WEARING OF MASKS TO PREVENT OR CHECK INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC. CASES HERE ROSE STEADILY FROM TWO HUNDRED PER DAY OCTOBER SIX TO OVER TWO THOUSAND OCTOBER TWENTYFIFTH. ON TWENTIETH SOME OUR PEOPLE WORE MASKS. ON TWENTY FIRST ON RECOMMENDATION HEALTH BOARD MAYOR ROLPH ISSUED PROCLAMATION CALLING FOR EVERYBODY WEARING MASKS. NEARLY WHOLE POPULATION COMPLIED. RED CROSS BACKED WITH ADVERTISING AND TWO DAYS LATER SUPERVISORS PASSED ORDINANCE REQUIRING WEARING BY ALL PERSONS. PRACTICALLY WHOLE POPULATION IN MASKS BY TWENTY THIRD STOP. FIVE DAYS AFTER FIRST MASKS APPEARED OR THREE DAYS AFTER USE BECAME GENERAL, NEW CASES DROPPED APPROXIMATELY FIFTY PERCENT. DEATHS AT PEAK 194, YESTERDAY ONLY 103, MANY OF THESE HAVING BEEN SICK FOR SOME DAYS. NEW CASES DECREASING DAILY. HEALTH AUTHORITIES SAY SAN FRANCISCO PROBABLY GET THROUGH WITH FAR LESS DISTRESS AND DEATH THAN EASTERN CITIES WHICH STARTED WITH ABOUT OUR FIGURES BUT KEPT ON GOING UP WHILE OURS WENT DOWN. ALL AGREE MASKS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE. SENDING THIS FOR YOUR INFORMATION BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN THE WHOLE TERRIBLE EFFECT OF EPIDEMIC HERE, BECAUSE MASKS HAVE SAVED UNTOLD SUFFERING AND MANY DEATHS, AND BECAUSE SANTA BARBARA MY OLD HOME CITY. PORTLAND SEATTLE FOLLOWING SAN FRANCISCO'S LEAD.
EDWARD RAINY.