

Papers of Mayor James Rolph

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THE INFLUENZA MASK AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES:

The Red Cross Society, or any other organization, has no right whatever to cause sensational alarms by saying: "Influenza! Wear Your Mask! It Might Save Your Life!" Because a great many sensitive and excitable persons contract epidemic diseases through fear and fright.

The Red Cross is welcome to suggest all the best means at their command to check plagues, etc., so long as it does not encroach upon the personal liberties of the people, by using the press and both the civil and military powers, to force the people to wear the unsanitary, outrageous, horrible masks.

Excepting hospitals, sick rooms, and dissecting rooms, the mask should never be permitted on the public thoroughfares for the following reasons, to-wit: It scares the people, it develops diseases and spreads them, it smells bad, it harms the wearer (while inhaling his or her own carbonic acid gas), it encourages municipal corruptions, it discourages immigration, it hurts both the State and business generally, it endangers the public safety, it puts out of sight our young girls, it spoils engagements, it delays marriages, it enables married folks to deceive each other, it disables the police to take the men who robbed the train, it pleases the kaiser, and it creates, far and wide, a warlike feeling because the cure for influenza is still worse than the influenza.

According to the Laws of Nature, the mouth and nose must have a free action to expel the carbonic acid gas while breathing; hence, any devices on the contrary are positively unhealthy.

Instead of masks—while fevers are around—I suggest that a disinfecting pad of blue silk, like a badge (3 in. x 2¼ in.) should be carried on the left side of the chest by persons in good health, and a red color by those people having contagious diseases.

Fevers come along with the history of the Animal Kingdom as a natural, necessary evil to check the overgrowth of races, rational and irrational alike. And the best means to meet them are fumigations, disinfectants and the cultivation of plants. So, with or without plagues at hand, railroad companies, theatres, churches, schools, stores, etc., should always have disinfectants.

The cultivation of both gardens and forests answers five important purposes, to say nothing of the middle man, to-wit: (1)—It absorbs the carbonic acid gas from the atmosphere; (2)—It employs the idle; (3)—It beautifies the surroundings; (4)—It encourages the wind-mill industry; and, (5)—It prevents the scarcity of food and timber. Likewise, the Rocky Mountains could be improved by degrees.

Drenches of drinking-water as a preventive, being highly injurious to health, should be discontinued from the fact that they multiply the ague fever, the malaria fever, the typhus fever, and the influenza fever.

Drinking-water should be taken as indicated by Nature and never as recommended by Dr. Sangrado (in Gil Blas of Santillane, by Le Sage) and by some boards of health. Bear in mind that the drinking-water is not the same throughout the world.

Boards of health should be managed by reliable physicians only; which institutions should act within the limits of the Constitution of the United States. Hence, the arbitrary mask law, being unconstitutional, must be revoked for good before anything of a fatal nature occurs.

The names and addresses of new patients are positively demanded in print for investigation.

As the influenza can be had at any time, avoid cold refreshments, ice creams, sleighing soon after leaving theatre, dancing, gymnasium, bowling; keeping one eye on the sudden changes of temperature by carrying the overcoat, etc.; also, avoid cold, solid floors wherever you work.

The writer, willing to restore the good name of California, has suggested to the now Governor of the State, that the money collected through an arbitrary, martial-like law should be refunded.

Fraternally,
ERMINIO CHAVEZ, SR.

Alameda, Calif., January, 1919.

96 Please acknowledge receipt of this circular.

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