

CONTIN DON'T RELAX PRECAUTIONS SAYS HASSLER

Record Established by City in
Stamping Out Disease
Unless Relapse Occurs

552 CASES YESTERDAY

Fatal Mistake of Growing
Careless Too Soon Shown
in Eastern Cities

WITHIN less than a month after the influenza contagion began to spread in this city, the health authorities have it on the down grade. If the precautions now being taken are continued, said Health Officer William C. Hassler yesterday, the chance is excellent that San Francisco will break all records in getting rid of the epidemic.

But he points a warning with the example of the most of the Eastern cities that have had the influenza. In almost every case after the contagion had begun to wane, it burst out afresh and became worse than ever. This, he said, was due to overconfidence and relaxation of measures against the epidemic.

SITUATION BRIGHTENING

In almost all respects the situation was better yesterday, although the deaths from influenza still kept up to a high figure. The number of cases reported during the twenty-four hours was 552, of which 124 were actually of the day. This was a heavy drop from the 950 cases reported on Thursday.

The number of pneumonia cases taken to the hospitals rose a little above the low figure of Thursday, when only seventy-eight cases were handled, but this was explained by Dr. Hassler as due to the fact that more hospital room had made it possible to take less serious cases than were admitted during the crisis. Thursday's record of seventy-eight pneumonia cases handled by the emergency service was a drop from 133 on the previous day. It was noticed at the Central Emergency Hospital yesterday that for the first time since the epidemic became serious not a single case walked into the hospital. Up to yesterday many homeless men came in suffering from pneumonia.

With the opening of the Red Cross building at the Civic Center the hospital situation became very much improved yesterday. The Red Cross building is being used exclusively for convalescents. Thither all convalescents are being taken from the San Francisco Hospital, leaving that institution much freer to handle new cases.

As the numbers reduce, said the Health Officer, the San Francisco Hospital will be able to take less and less serious cases, and will thus be able to get at them earlier. During the critical period, when every bit of room in the hospital was crowded, it was possible, he said, to take in only the grave cases.

The death list yesterday from influenza was 98. According to the Health Officer, the average time in which death ensues in a fatal case of influenza is five days from the time the patient came down. It was pointed out that the number of pneumonia patients admitted to the San Francisco Hospital reached its maximum at Sunday and was still high on Wednesday, so that a heavy death list is to be expected for two or three days yet.

TOTAL HERE, 20,206

The grand total of influenza cases in San Francisco has now reached 20,208, and the tale of deaths is 1165.

The history of the epidemic in San Francisco shows that as far as is known there was one case in the city on October 1, that on October 6 it was suddenly discovered that there were 200 cases. The numbers rose then until on October 22 1800 cases were reported for the day. On that day the mask ordinance was passed and masks had been worn generally for a day or two. So that when the peak of the epidemic was reached on October 25, when 2006 cases were reported in twenty-four hours, the wearing of the masks had already begun to have its effect, and in one day the new cases fell off to 1800, reported on October 26. By October 31 the epidemic had fallen to 950 cases reported for the twenty-four hours, and on November 1 it had dropped to 552.

"Keep on wearing the masks," said Dr. Hassler yesterday, "and we will soon be rid of it. I regard 600 cases a day as about the half-tide. Above that point the spread of the contagion is rapid. Below it the reduction of the epidemic should be speedy if all precautions are kept up."

The distribution of the Leary vaccine from the Health Office continues as fast as supplies come in. So far about 50,000 cubic centimeters of the vaccine have been distributed to hospitals and physicians in this city, and judging from the persistence of the demand, the Health Officer assumes that it has all been used. This means that about 18,000 persons have received the prophylactic injections, or probably many more, considering that a large proportion of them have not yet received all three doses. The Central Emergency Hospital alone administered more than 1500 doses in twenty-four hours yesterday.