

HASSLER AND CITY LEADERS HOLD CONFAB

Unless Situation Grows Much Worse in 72 Hours, City Chiefs Oppose Mandate

PRECAUTIONS FAVORED

Health Officer Tells Theaters and Dance Halls Closing Is Very Unlikely

UNLESS the influenza situation becomes much worse during the next seventy-two hours, San Francisco will not again be ordered to don gauze masks.

This was the agreement reached yesterday between Dr. William C. Hassler, City Health Officer, the Board of Supervisors and a committee of five, representing the business interests of the city.

For their own protection, however, citizens are advised to wear the face coverings until the Board of Health announces that the epidemic has been stamped out.

A close check will be kept on the situation between now and Thursday, and if a flare-up develops the Board of Supervisors will be requested to re-enact the ordinance making the wearing of masks compulsory. Until then the use of gauze masks as a preventive against influenza will be voluntary.

NO NEED TO CLOSE

Proprietors of theaters, dancing halls and other places of amusement were assured yesterday by Dr. Hassler that it would not be necessary again to close if ordinary precautions were taken.

The influenza situation was the subject of discussion at two meetings yesterday. The Retail Dry Goods Association met in the morning and protested against a return to the use of gauze masks. Members of the association expressed the belief that the influenza could be eradicated if handled sensibly, and it was due to the influence brought to bear by them that the re-enactment of the mask-wearing ordinance was deferred.

In the afternoon the situation was placed before the Board of Supervisors. Wearing a mask, the Mayor presided. He said that although the use of gauze face coverings would not be made mandatory for at least three days, if at all, for their own well-being the people should voluntarily don masks.

ATTACK MORE DIRE

According to Dr. Hassler, the effects of a second attack of influenza are likely to be more dire than the first "This," he said, "has been the case in many other cities." Dr. Hassler added:

"For the time being there is no cause for great alarm; but the public certainly should take every precaution against the epidemic. I particularly want to ask the people to carry out the several preventive measures suggested by the Health Board when the epidemic first became prevalent.

"In this connection I want to impress upon the public the need for keeping away from those who cough or sneeze. They are sure carriers of the disease, and must be avoided as much as possible. If this is done it is safe for the people to shop as usual.

"Personally, I am a firm believer in the use of the gauze masks. It is my conviction that those who wear them will not contract influenza."

CO-OPERATION URGED

Dr. Hassler said that the Board of Health would employ every means within its power to forestall another epidemic. Several new assistants are to be appointed and the co-operation of the public is sought in handling the situation.

The number of new cases reported up to 5 o'clock yesterday were 115 and the total deaths five. It is thought, however, that these figures will be increased by later reports.

Since Friday over 100 new cases of influenza have been reported to the Board of Health daily. Dr. Hassler says it is impossible to give accurate figures for each day owing to the inaccuracy in dates of cases reported. He said, however, that the number of cases daily for the last four days has been well over 100.

Reports that the Mayor and Dr. Hassler were in active disagreement over the handling of the situation were flatly denied yesterday by both.