

MASK-WEARING ORDER GOES AS EPIDEMIC DIES

Mayor Nullifies Ordinance Following Special Health Board Meeting

Following a special meeting of the Board of Health yesterday morning, at which it was decided that the influenza flare-up had subsided to such an extent that the people might safely be permitted to unmask, the Mayor issued a proclamation nullifying the mask ordinance, as follows:

"In accordance with the provisions of Ordinance No. 4758, passed by the honorable Board of Supervisors of this city and county, on January 17, 1919, the people of San Francisco have been wearing gauze masks as a means for combating the then prevalent epidemic of Spanish influenza.

"The Board of Public Health having this day determined that said epidemic has ceased to exist, I, as Mayor, acting upon such information from the Board of Health, do hereby declare the necessity for the wearing of the mask to have ceased and by this proclamation hereby nullify said Ordinance No. 4758, under which it has been required that masks be worn.

The Board of Health intended to meet tomorrow night for a further consideration of the subject. But, as the reports indicated a continued decrease in the number of cases, a meeting was held yesterday and the decision reached. A bulletin of the rescinding action was immediately posed by The Chronicle, and the masks quickly disappeared.

In commenting on the course the Board of Health has taken in the matter, President Arthur H. Barend said the Board had been as eager to recommend unmasking, when it should be safe, as it had been for the adoption of the mask ordinance. He added:

"We cannot in this matter pay any attention to any public agitators against the mask for the obvious reason that the question is one of public health and not of like or dislike of the mask. As near as it was possible to demonstrate that the mask is an effective preventive of the disease, that demonstration has been made. Furthermore, from the numerous agitators against the mask not one has come forward with any suggestion either of a substitute for the mask or any other measure of prevention of the disease. The Board of Health therefore, did the only thing it could do—it used the means which appeared to be effective, which had proved effective in other cities and which was recognized by medical authorities, and secured the general adoption of the mask.