

# ILLNESS GRIPS ALL ONTARIO

## Influenza Spreading Rapidly in Province, Say Health Authorities

### STATEMENT IS ISSUED

### Not Advisable at Present to Close Schools, Theatres and Churches

Spanish influenza is rapidly spreading from one end of the Province to the other, and Provincial health authorities believe that before it is eradicated more than half of the population will in all probability be affected by it. There are hundreds and perhaps thousands of cases of the malady, but because doctors are not required to make reports of the disease to the department it is impossible to gain any accurate knowledge of the number of people stricken with it.

The Provincial Board of Health is besieged with inquiries from health officers of cities and towns asking what measures should be taken. Yesterday the Provincial Officer of Health, Lieut.-Col. J. W. S. McCullough, issued a statement setting forth the precautionary measures that should be taken to fight the disease, as well as what should be done when a person is stricken with it.

Except perhaps in country districts the board is against the closing of schools, churches, theatres, etc., as precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Local medical officers of health are advised that they should do nothing, consistent with the welfare of the public, likely to dislocate business or the ordinary affairs of life. However, if local officers deem it necessary to close the schools the Provincial authorities will not interfere.

#### Statement Is Issued.

In view of press comment suggesting the closing of schools, churches, theatres, etc., Dr. McCullough issued the following statement:

"The board is besieged with inquiries from the health officers of cities and towns as to whether or not schools, churches, theatres and other places of assemblage should be closed as a means of prevention in influenza. To these inquiries the board has given the following answer:

"Health authorities have the power under section 56, ss. 2 of the Public Health Act to close schools, churches, theatres and other places of assemblage if it is deemed advisable to do so.

"Asked what the board advises regarding this measure we have said the weight of public health authorities is against closing such places, except perhaps in country districts. For the following reasons: In cities and towns it is impossible to prevent children conglomering in the streets and playgrounds, where they are without the supervision found in the school. Hence closing schools is more effective in country districts. Closing schools is economically wasteful and usually has no influence on the course of an outbreak of disease like influenza. Children are less likely to infect one another in the classroom than in the home or on the playground. As a rule better results will be achieved by a daily inspection of school children, such as for example is maintained in cities like Toronto.

"There is not great danger of spreading the disease in churches, theatres and other assemblages if these places are well ventilated. In any case, the good derived from closing places of assemblage is more than counterbalanced by the conditions in crowded street cars, railway cars, in large shops and in restaurants where food and dishes may be handled by persons having the disease. It would be just as rational and much more effective to stop all travel on street cars and trains, and to stop people from entering shops, eating places, etc., as to close schools, churches, theatres, etc.

"Health officers should do nothing, consistent with the welfare of the public, likely to dislocate business or the ordinary affairs of life. They should not be moved from their duty by public clamor to adopt hasty and ill-advised measures which only serve to irritate the public and accomplish no useful purpose. If, however, the health officer of any municipality deems it his duty to utilize the section of the act referred to the Provincial Board will not interfere with him, but the board does not, for the reasons given, propose to ask its enforcement."

#### Hints on Avoiding Disease.

"There is a shortage of physicians, nurses and hospital accommodation," Dr. McCullough said. "The health and efficiency of the civilian population must be maintained. It is the patriotic duty of every citizen to avoid influenza and keep in good health." To avoid influenza, Dr. McCullough said:

Avoid contact with other people so far as possible, especially avoid crowds indoors, in street cars, theatres, motion picture houses and other places of public assemblage.

Avoid persons suffering from "colds," sore throats and coughs.

Avoid chilling of the body or living in rooms of temperature below 65 degrees or above 72 degrees.

Sleep and work in clean fresh air.

Keep your hands clean and keep them out of your mouth.

Avoid expectorating in public places and see that others do likewise.

Avoid visiting the sick.

Eat plain, nourishing food and avoid alcoholic stimulants.

Cover your nose with your handkerchief when you sneeze, your mouth when you cough; change handkerchiefs frequently; promptly disinfect soiled handkerchiefs by boiling or washing with soap and water.

Don't worry; keep your feet warm; wet feet demand prompt attention. Wet clothes are dangerous and must be removed as soon as possible.

#### Advice for the Sick.

To those stricken with the malady and colds, Dr. McCullough gives the following advice:

Often times it is impossible to tell a cold from mild influenza, therefore:

If you get a cold, go to bed in a well ventilated room. Keep warm.

Keep away from other people. Do not kiss anyone.

Use individual basins, and knives, forks, spoons, towels, handkerchiefs, soap; wash plates and cups.

Every case of influenza should go to bed at once under the care of a physician. The patient should stay in bed at least three days after fever has disappeared and until convalescence is well established.

The patient must not cough or

sneeze except when a mask or handkerchief is held before the face.

The patient should be in a warm well-ventilated room.

There is no specific for the disease. Symptoms should be met as they arise.

The great danger is from pneumonia. Avoid it by staying in bed while actually ill and until convalescence is fully established.

The after-effects of influenza are worse than the disease. Take care of yourself.