

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED CASES OF INFLUENZA IN NORTHERN B. C.

The Citizen is indebted to the provincial police for the following information relating to the late influenza epidemic as it was felt in this district:

The first manifestation of this epidemic was noticed in Prince George on October 15th, 1918. Prior to this its presence had been established at Lucerne, near the eastern provincial boundary. Thereafter outbreaks were reported from centres often widely apart, but invariably in proximity to railway depots, pointing to dissemination by transients and railway employees.

Acting on instructions from government agents the provincial police alleviated the sufferings of a great many in isolated sections. The officers were frequently called upon to serve both as doctor and nurse, and were active day and night, in many instances contracting the disease they were called upon to fight.

On October 16th, under provincial auspices, the Connaught Hotel, Prince George, was converted into an emergency hospital. Accommodation thus provided being insufficient, further quarters were opened on October 23rd in the Union Rooms.

At their inception these hospitals were staffed by voluntary helpers, but the strain on this assistance becoming great, owing to illness in the homes of many of the volunteers, thereafter salaried workers were employed. From information obtained from various sources there were approximately 1800 known cases in the district between Lucerne on the east and Kitselas on the west. Of these 220 succumbed to pneumonia complications. It is noteworthy that those suffering from pulmonary complications were usually men physically robust.

Mortality among Indians was exceedingly heavy and may be attributed to lack of care consequent upon their nomadic tendencies, coupled with a native stoicism when finally prostrated.

Prince George Hospitals.

About sixty beds were provided in the two provincial hospitals in Prince George. A fortunate government purchase of blankets was particularly opportune owing to a general local shortage. A dearth of essential drugs developed early, and the attorney-general's conditional assent to the seizure of liquor held by the Canadian Express Company was timely.

At both hospitals a superintendent was placed in complete charge with a necessary staff of nurses and orderlies. Mr. W. D. Smith, at the Connaught, and Mr. A. Wright, at the Union—subsequently taken ill and replaced by Mr. F. Tapley—rendered excellent service.

The entire management of the two hospitals was in the hands of Captain (Dr.) Lazier, who worked long hours in connection with the epidemic, besides caring for a large number of outside patients. Dr. Lazier was suffering severely from phlebitis during the whole of this period and was able to walk only with the greatest difficulty.

Stony Creek Indians.

The epidemic's course ran with exceptional severity on the Stony Reserve near Vanderhoof, and but for the splendid work of Rev. Father Coccolo, many more would have died. Affectionately known throughout the north, Father Coccolo has spent the greater part of a long life in this section of the province, and his success in this instance was due to the implicit trust placed in him by the Indians.

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