

THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC AND HOW WE TRIED TO CONTROL IT.

BY ELIZABETH J. DAVIES, R. N.

Extra-Cantonment Zone, Camp Lewis, Washington

The Extra-Cantonment Zone extends about ten miles around Camp Lewis. It includes six small towns with population varying from 200 to 700. Two of the larger towns possess resident physicians, one a health officer, but a large portion of the people live from ten to twenty-seven miles from the services of a doctor. The population outside of the towns live either on small farms, or work in the neighboring shipyards, mills or logging camps, all depending on their daily labor. The school population as taken last year numbered about 1,000 children in twenty-one school districts; this year there is an increase of about one hundred.

The U. S. Public Health Service has special rules regarding health matters in the zone, and a nurse is provided to care for the school children, reporting all contagious diseases found, following up in the homes all absentees, giving instructions regarding the welfare of the children, and making routine inspections in the school room; and when the epidemic first made its appearance we were making regular examinations of all children of pre-school age.

Here in the West we are very proud, and at times boastful of our climate, which is exceedingly temperate, and when we read of the ravages of Influenza in the East, we wondered how it would affect us. October 7th we had our first case, a mild one at American Lake, a mother of a family, but it did not spread among the other members. Three days passed before we discovered any more, but in six days cases were found in all districts, and orders were given on October 18th for the closing of all schools, which cut off a medium of infection, but also a source of knowledge. The days succeeding the closing of the schools were very hard, as so much time was wasted in finding the sick, instead of spending it in caring for them.

It was decided by our Medical Directors, Dr. C. H. Woolsey and Dr. S. W. Merritt, that the teachers must be used, so on October 27th a meeting was called of all the teachers in the Extra-Cantonment Zone, and fourteen districts were represented. A plan was propounded by which each district should be covered by the teacher every third day, house-to-house visits made, and all

sick found to be reported to the nurse by phone that evening, or before 8 a. m. the next morning. Many teachers unable to attend the meeting also kept strict watch and reported. Literature regarding Influenza was distributed widely through this source, and personal information given. In all, the teachers found about 120 cases out of 209 cases reported. In one district a teacher found five whole families sick at once, unable to get help, and in one instance the mother, with five sick children around her, died before medical help could be obtained.

In one family a married daughter from Montana came to visit her home, bringing with her a three-year-old child. The mother contracted influenza, infecting her daughter, who during the attack gave birth to a baby; the young husband arrived and came down at once with the disease, each developed pneumonia; a sister came to nurse them and she developed influenza in a few hours; another sister was telegraphed for and arrived on the scene with her family of two children, and all came down; there were not enough beds to accommodate the sick. In a period of five days all were desperately ill; in passing, it might be stated that this family recovered. In all, we had twelve full families down at once.

There is a Ford machine provided for the nurse, which certainly helps, but in this epidemic it was invaluable. as bundles of pneumonia jackets were piled in the back seat, and containers of soup were carried to those needing it. A nurse walking could not have done it.

It was very difficult to get the needed nursing care for the patients, but the Red Cross sent out one trained nurse for one night, and two practical nurses for limited periods. The Service, acting under instructions from Washington, engaged a nurse for the emergency; after four day's work she contracted influenza. Pneumonia jackets were supplied by the Red Cross Chapters, local and central. They also supplied the Department with quantities of masks.

We had no standard orders at first, but after the first few cases we made the general rule as follows: pneumonia jackets for all the sick, masks for the attendants, noting of temperature, cathartics, patients to have plenty of fresh air and copious drinks. At first the patients were carefully sponged, but with twenty calls to be made daily, many of which meant whole families sick and no doctor, the sponges were given only to those who needed it most. Patients were nursed three in a bed and, where children were con-



cerned, four to six in a bed. Doors were left ajar for the nurse, and many good neighbors, unafraid, assisted in washing dishes and in the care of the sick.

As we look back over the past five weeks, which we would not like to live over again, we are thankful for good health, so that we could help these people in their time of need. Also, our patients see Uncle Sam in a guise they have never seen him before; they may have been good citizens before, but these experiences have not impaired their citizenship at all.

Mistakes were made at the beginning of the epidemic. Patients insisted upon getting up with disastrous results; it was noticed if they were kept quite still, and supplied with plenty of fluid nourishment, along with cathartics, even if the surroundings were not good, they did well.

During the coming winter we intend to follow up all recovered cases, and do all we can to prevent tuberculosis and other diseases.

INFLUENZA IN LOUISVILLE, KY.

BY HELEN BELL LUPTON

Superintendent of the King's Daughters' District Nursing Association of Louisville.

Influenza was rampant among the soldiers at Camp Taylor and we among the civilian population felt we must be ready for the catastrophe when it reached us.

On Monday morning, October 7th, a meeting was called by Dr. Norment, acting City Health Officer, and under The Federal Public Health Service. There were present the supervisors and representatives of The Babies' Milk Fund Association, the Board of Tuberculosis, the King's Daughters' District Nurse Association, and the conference resulted in the decision that nursing care was the greatest present need. Two nurses from each organization, except the Federal Public Health Service, were turned over to the District Nurse Association and began work the following morning. The original eight districts were kept, with the new nurses added as relief under the regular district nurses' supervision. The work grew alarmingly each day, and the nurses unaccustomed to Public Health work went down first, and then two more who had predisposition to "colds." All available service, trained, practical and untrained, was being rushed to the Base Hospital to care for our sol-

diers, to whom we all owed first thought in their great distress, so it was impossible to replace nurses when they became ill.

Larger masks than those supplied by the local Red Cross, were made by friends, and gowns borrowed from Red Cross, those bought with private funds and those from our own loan closet were freely used. Long-sleeved aprons were used in many district homes and left with the patients.

The Women's Service League and The Louisville Automobile Club gave service daily, including Sunday, and made it possible for an average of ten nurses to make 2,589 visits during October.

The City Hospital filled to its limits and an Emergency Hospital was opened in second and third floors of a mission for homeless men. This hospital was supervised by the acting Health Officer and the Supervising Nurse of the United States Public Health Service. In twenty-four hours it was filled and patients were given excellent care under trained supervision. The stress of work lasted for a month and then rapidly declined. Since we have been threatened with an alarming recrudescence, but radical changes of nursing personnel were not again necessary.

Opening a free soup kitchen was seriously considered, but between prompt emergency relief from Red Cross Home Service, the Associated Charities and the Emergency Hospital this did not seem necessary.

The great thing gained out of so tragic an experience as an epidemic was the ease of co-operation among Louisville's public and private health agencies. There had been little doubt of this before when we were facing a question involving our ability to work together, but staff nurse, supervisors and administrative bodies stood shoulder to shoulder without one hour lost in friction or needless argument.

The city through the Board of Public Safety, met the added expenses incurred, which were carefully tabulated in the District Nurse Association office.

Too much cannot be said in praise for the staff nurses who worked without ceasing, turned private cars into ambulances, with their owner's permission, and acted as the only distributing relief agency during those four awful weeks. We did not suffer in any comparison to other cities and yet in proportion to our staff, we felt we had really faced a serious time.



Visiting nursing is certainly a necessary part of each community, and as we read the reports of other cities and towns we are impressed with the worth-whileness of a body of nurses trained to care for the sick in their homes.

The Public Health Report for December 6th gives 3,620 cases for the week ending October 12th for Camp Taylor and vicinity and Louisville Public Health Department gives 6,233 cases reported for the entire month of October; and 9,535 cases for the entire epidemic.

THE EPIDEMIC IN JOLIET, ILL.

BY FLORENCE C. BALDWIN

Head Community Nurse

During the months of October and November, Joliet was plunged suddenly into an acute and fearful Influenza epidemic. In a city of 40,000 population there were approximately 1,800 cases and 263 deaths. The Community Nurses ministered to 186 cases of Influenza and pneumonia in the homes. As a result of the fearful amount of illness and the fatalities, Mr. Wm. Buchanan, President of the Public Health Council, called on the morning of October 10th at 9:30 a. m., a meeting in the office of the Health Commissioner, consisting of himself, with the Secretary of the Public Health Council, Head Community Nurse, and two members of the Mayor's staff, to discuss and formulate plans for the use of the Country Club, about three miles from town, as an emergency hospital. The Club House was visited, supplies ordered, and by 1 o'clock the first three patients were being cared for in the new hospital. From the first hour of its work the wonderful spirit of sympathetic, comprehensive co-operation and desire to help by the citizens, both trained and lay workers, was evidenced. Men and women from all walks of life called up, asking to serve. The hospital took only influenza patients or cases of pneumonia, a direct result of the former. Beds, mattresses and linen were loaned by one of the local hospitals and the E. J. & E. R. R.; medicines and drugs were furnished at a liberal discount, many physicians giving supplies. Food and delicacies of all kinds were donated in large quantities, oftentimes dinners or suppers for the entire working force being sent all cooked ready to serve. One of the city hospitals furnished training nurses every day for five weeks. During