

I had a talk with the doctor myself, and went down and saw the patients, where I found Drs. Mackenzie and Russell. The position was discussed as regards the diagnoses, and we went into the question as to whether it was pure influenza or simple influenza. As to the position on the boat, there were two definite cases of pneumonia, and one or two with slight crepitation in the lungs. Dr. Russell was in private practice as well as being Port Health Officer, and he holds that he had on shore before the "Niagara" arrived a case of pneumonic influenza which was worse than any of those cases on the ship. . . . According to Dr. Russell there was very little difference in the symptoms of what we were having on shore at the time and the cases on the ship.

He must have had in his mind the interpretation in the Minister's telegram of pure influenza, "if the disease is or is not pure influenza, presenting the same indications as that which has been prevailing in the Dominion for some time past."

In answer to the question, "Did you find any difference?" Dr. Hughes said,—

Practically none at all, but the three of us discussed the position, and came to the conclusion that it was purely simple influenza. It did not go through the passengers. There were only those two definite cases of pneumonia, and some of the nurses had gone down during the trip, but none of the doctors; and under the conditions those men were living in or being nursed I would quite expect to find two pneumonias out of the influenzas.

It was after this that he sent the telegram to the Minister telling him that one death had occurred on the "Niagara" from bronchial pneumonia after influenza—purely simple influenza—and received the Minister's reply, "Ship may be cleared." In reply to questions Dr. Hughes said he had made inquiries as regards troubles on the way across, and as to whether there was any disease at the ports at which the ships called; but when asked if he had had communication with any one else than Drs. Mackenzie and Barnett on these subjects he said, "No; I relied on the doctors on the ship"; and, questioned as to whether none of the passengers were asked, he said, "No; I relied absolutely on the doctors in making a diagnosis. I had no discussion with other persons on board with regard to the state of health on board." In answer to the question, "After you declared the ship clear, were the passengers and crew allowed to go ashore and backwards and forwards?" he said, "I asked that any of the crew who had been sick at all during the voyage should not be given passes to the shore, but that all the others could go."

Dr. Hughes in evidence says, "The Minister's wire is dated 12th October, 1.25 p.m."; and when being questioned as to when the removal of patients from the ship took place he replied, "The ambulance was waiting from 10 o'clock to take them away, but they were being taken when I left the boat at about 3 o'clock, I think." Further, in answer to the question, "At what time were the first of them taken off the boat?" replied, "I cannot say absolutely. The two bad cases were allowed to be taken away as soon as possible—I suppose, between 12 and 1 o'clock. The others were taken as soon as possible after that." Patients were being taken away when Dr. Hughes left the boat about 3 o'clock. With regard to the two severe cases, he says the case of the fireman was pretty bad, and adds, "One of these cases was delirious, and the other was pretty seriously ill. One died, and the other recovered." In reply to the question, "Were you aware at the time the ship came in of the existence of a severe form of influenza in England?" he said, "We had very little information about the influenza at all at that time."

What had you?—That there was influenza of a serious nature and many deaths in South Africa.

What about England?—I cannot remember having heard about it there.

You were not aware of the pandemic influenza in England?—I do not think so.

Were there any reports of a very virulent form of influenza in Europe?—There was, I believe, some word from Europe, but South Africa was the only place I had in my mind.

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How many cases of influenza were there among the passengers?—There were about half a dozen during the voyage, but most of them had recovered. There were two passengers for New Zealand suffering from the complaint when the boat arrived.

What became of those passengers?—They were sent to private hospitals.

Did they survive?—Yes. . . .

In the wire you received about the vessel before she arrived it was stated there had been a hundred cases on board. Were you surprised to find there were only twenty-eight cases when she came alongside?—There were more than that; there were fifty-eight altogether; there were twenty-eight in the hospital.

Were they all passengers?—Passengers and crew.

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