

Were they in hospital?—No; we had room for only about ten cases in hospital.

Was there any attempt to segregate the sick people?—No, practically none.

No effort made?—No; the sickness was in practically every portion of the ship.

How many cases were there at Suva when you took charge?—I should think, between fifty and sixty.

When a person is attacked in this way when do the first symptoms develop?—The incubation period is from one to four days.

It is possible, I suppose, that there might be amongst those who were well a person who might have the germ of the disease? It is possible.

Of course, we know that this form of influenza was not notifiable at that time, and unless there were some definite symptoms people were free to go ashore?—Yes.

How do you attribute the disease being largely confined to the stewards?—They appeared to me to be more closely housed together than were the people in any of the other quarters. Their quarters were down in the stern of the ship.

It is singular that throughout the whole of the proceedings apparently hardly any mention is made of this ominous “wireless” with which all the persons interested must have been familiar. Apparently it was ignored, and no explanation asked or tendered as to the discrepancy between its description of the situation and that given in the evidence of the medical men on the ships and in the telegram finally forwarded to the Minister. The first step directed towards the disembarkation of passengers was stayed by the Minister at a late hour, and he then, apparently without any further information as to the condition of matters on board, telegraphed to his representative to report not in general terms, but by answering categorically two questions:—

(a.) Number of deaths, if any, on ship since leaving Vancouver.

(b.) Whether disease is not pure influenza, presenting same indications as that which prevailed in the Dominion for some time.

To this telegram the Health Office replied:—

On Niagara one death last night, broncho-pneumonia after influenza. Disease purely simple influenza. Only two passengers for New Zealand on board with it.

The Minister telegraphed at once, “Ship may be cleared.”

It is difficult to see how the Minister could be satisfied by these communications in the face of the earlier official information from the ship as to a condition of things which, if true, made her a menace to the health of the city. It is also difficult to understand how the Health Officers on board the vessel accepted the diagnosis of the acting ship’s doctor as to the form and character of the sickness without (as far as appears) any reference to or explanation of the compromising telegram.

We have next to consider the condition of the patients landed from the “Niagara” and lodged in a special ward in the Auckland Hospital.

Dr. Maguire, Medical Superintendent of the Auckland Hospital, asked what was the position with regard to influenza in Auckland prior to the arrival of the “Niagara,” says,—

The date of her arrival was the 12th October, and prior to that date I do not know of any case of influenza that had been admitted to the Hospital for some months.

Later he mentions two cases in June—they were simple cases. He said he had not heard of any cases prior to the 12th October. As to the “Niagara” cases, he says,—

The first cases of influenza admitted to the Hospital were on the 12th October, the date of the arrival of the “Niagara,” from which we got twenty-eight patients on that date. . . . Of these cases three men were suffering from a virulent form in the shape of bronchial pneumonia. On the 13th October six further cases were admitted, but only one of those men was very bad with the bronchial stage. Then on the 17th October a stewardess was admitted. On the 21st two further cases, both nurses, were admitted. Apparently they had been in attendance on the patients on the vessel. These were all the patients admitted from the “Niagara”—thirty-seven in all.

Only two patients from the “Niagara” died—a man admitted on the 12th October. Having been previously gassed, he was therefore more liable to contract the virulent form of infection than another person, as his lungs were not normal. The point, however, is that he did in fact contract this virulent form when he was on the “Niagara.” Asked when the first influenza cases began to come in, Dr. Maguire replied, “From the same date as the arrival of the ‘Niagara,’ when an ordinary case was admitted—I think, of a woman. After that the cases began to