

Diphtheria

Scare in S.E.

By LAEL MORGAN

The dark age disease diphtheria surfaced in the southeast Alaska early this month, claiming two victims and giving public health officials a good work-out. The rumors were wilder than the epidemic, however.

Only two cases of a rumored 40 actually ended up in Mount Edgecumbe Hospital, and there

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were no deaths.

Contacts have been located and immunized and the outbreak is now believed to be under control.

The disease was discovered in Hoonah according to Dr. C. B. Van Arsdall, Mt. Edgecumbe Native Hospital. The carrier appears to have come from Seattle where a small outbreak occurred earlier this year. Luckily the Hoonah school-age children were already 97 per cent immunized, and older villagers were inoculated immediately.

Surrounding villages are inoculating their older people as a precautionary measure, although bad weather is hampering flights bringing vaccine to health aides.

There is some concern that people exposed in Hoonah may have spread the disease at the well-attended Alaska Native Brotherhood meeting in Ketchikan recently. But Dr. Van Arsdall does not think this is the case.

Incubation periods for the disease is two to five days and there have been no cases reported in the following ten days.