

CANAL ZONE PLEASURES.

Baseball and Excursions for Employees—Groundless Complaints.

[From The Tribune Bureau.]

Washington, Oct. 7.—The extravagant exaggeration which seems inevitably to attach to every report coming from the isthmian canal zone is entirely responsible for the more or less fantastic reports regarding public sports, recreation, etc., to be supplied by the Canal Commission for the benefit of its employes on the isthmus. Clubs, theatres, side shows, professional baseball games and, in fact, every attribute of a county fair have appeared in the published reports of the government's plans for the zone, so much so that of late proprietors of side shows, merry-go-rounds and typical Coney Island amusements have been applying in force to the Canal Commission for employment on the zone, while wholesale criticism of the "benevolent paternalism" of the government has found space in certain of the public prints.

Of course the facts warrant neither the applications nor the criticism. Governor Magoon is the father of the idea of amusements for the canal employes, a fact which carries with it the assurance that nothing fantastic or unreasonable is contemplated. Along the line of the canal are many thousand Americans removed from the sources of amusement to which they are accustomed, from the society they were wont to enjoy at home and surrounded by conditions making for homesickness. With a view to supplying, in a rational and practical manner, some sources of amusement and to promoting contentment among the men who are destined to remain for, perhaps, years "strangers in a strange land," the Governor has suggested the levelling and setting apart of certain plots of ground to be used as ball grounds, tennis courts, etc., precisely as is now done in the public parks of thousands of American cities. In Washington, for instance, on the large circle back of the White House, there are maintained several baseball diamonds on which the employes of the government conduct a series of games throughout the season, the games being known and classified as the "Navy Department," the "Department of Agriculture," etc. In other words, this is a departmental league, whose matches attract thousands of spectators, who can witness the games without paying admission.

Baseball seems destined to become the national game of Panama. Governor Magoon, writing of the national celebration which occurred on the isthmus on the last Fourth of July, describes a game between the canal employes, Americans, and Panaman boys. To his regret, the Governor is compelled to relate that the Panaman boys—most of whom had been educated at American colleges—whipped the American employes so badly that he is ashamed to give the score.

Another source of amusement which has already been provided for the employes consists of free Sunday excursions to some of the beautiful islands which lie out at sea, off Panama. The tugs, lighters and other vessels which belong to the commission and which during the week are engaged in more serious business are devoted on Sundays to carrying parties to these islands, and in the estimation of the medical staff these little sea trips and the days spent on the islets in the Pacific have proved of incalculable assistance in maintaining the health of the employes and counteracting the more or less enervating character of the climate.

Nothing has been done in the way of promoting amusements, however, at the expense of the more practical work of the commission. What has been thus far accomplished has been done as a side issue, so to speak, and incidentally to the serious work of the employes. As opportunity permits bathing beaches will be established so that all the employes may enjoy opportunities for sea bathing. The public bathing beach at Washington probably suggested this idea to the up to date Governor, who is seeking so zealously to promote comfort and contentment among the Americans residing on the isthmus. Just at present comparatively little is being done along these lines, because the more important work of providing suitable quarters, satisfactory dining rooms, refrigerating facilities, both on land and on the steamers employed in bringing in provisions, is occupying all the attention of the employes and of those in authority. Nevertheless, when an opportunity presents itself to further the amusement end of the work it will not be overlooked.

Ultimately, when satisfactory living quarters have been supplied in abundance, some of the less suitable buildings now occupied for such purposes will doubtless be converted into club-houses for the use of the employes or turned over to the Young Men's Christian Association to be used as reading rooms, libraries, gymnasiums, etc., and it is entirely possible that some buildings may be erected for these purposes when the other work permits.

It has become obvious to Governor Magoon and to the other members of the commission that in many respects the greatest efficiency among the employes of the commission can be effected by affording them many of the privileges accorded to the army. For instance, all employes now enjoy the use of the hospitals,

medical attention, nursing and medicines, precisely as do the men in the army. The medical corps on the isthmus is composed of picked men from the army medical corps, many of whom have had extensive experience in Cuba. The hospitals are first class in every particular. American trained nurses are employed, and the results in the generally satisfactory sanitary and hygienic conditions among the American employes have already demonstrated the wisdom of this plan.

As a result of the broad policy of the commission and of the spirit with which Governor Magoon has entered into the promotion of happiness and contentment among the American employes, there is little discontent or dissatisfaction to be found on the isthmus. Occasionally, of course, men return to this country and exploit their grievances through the public press. They are the class of men whom it would be impossible to satisfy under any conditions. A carpenter who returned from Colon only this week aired his grievances to an interested group of newspaper men, and artistically handled they made a very sensational showing; but when this man was cross-examined by the officials of the commission the entire burden of his complaint was found to rest on the fact

that he had been compelled to sleep on a cot the first night after he landed on the isthmus. This man had enjoyed first class cabin passage to Colon at the expense of the commission. When he landed he was sent to the scene of his prospective labors, where he was to assist in the construction of a bridge. Other employes at this point were provided with beds in comfortable lodging houses, but none had been provided for him and he had been furnished a cot, with the promise that he would have a bed in due time. The change from the first cabin accommodations on the steamship had proved too radical for his peace of mind, however, and he returned to the United States the following day, loudly proclaiming that he was an American citizen and not to be imposed upon.

Another violent complaint registered recently at the headquarters of the commission in this city came from a man who had gone to the zone as a house carpenter and had been asked to help in the construction of a bridge. He had a further grievance in the fact that he had once had to wait twenty minutes for his breakfast. Such cases are regarded by the commission as inevitable where a large body of men are employed, but as long as they compose only an infinitesimal percentage of the whole there is no disposition to worry over them. Some facts with regard to the general provision for the employes may be of interest in this connection. They are furnished with quarters wherever possible, and where this has not yet been possible they are allowed 15 per cent additional pay as "commutation of quarters." They pay for their own meals at the public dining rooms, where the rates vary from \$14 to \$30 a month a person, according to the fare, the cheapest being of excellent quality but plain, the highest priced equal to first class

hotels in this country. As stated above, all medicines and medical attention are furnished free. Much of the work is constructive work, entirely similar to construction work on American railroads, except that the employes are rarely or never asked to put up with as poor accommodations as are almost invariably provided for the men building railroads in this country.

At present no "dirt" is being taken out of the canal. Much of the "dirt" excavated by the French engineers is now being removed to more remote dumping grounds, and the facilities for removing the waste material and for utilizing it to fill up marshy places and washes are being constructed or improved. That an error was made in the almost feverish haste which led to the beginning of excavation before facilities for the disposal of the material excavated were provided is admitted. This policy promptly resulted in congestion, and it soon became obvious that it would be folly to pursue it further, that it would only result in doubling the expense by making it necessary to handle all the material twice over. Now the railroad is being triple tracked, branches for disposing of the excavated material are being constructed, and when the actual work of excavation is

them, under cover of the darkness, in the flower beds where the chickens from next door were most wont to scratch.

"Then, the next morning, when the neighbor was looking over the hedge, Mr. Ronalds sauntered down his garden paths, and, with many pauses and stoopings, picked up one egg here and another there, till he had got the dozen, while the neighbor watched him with an expression of stern displeasure and surprise.

"From that day the next door chickens roamed no more."

ALL HAPPY BUT THE LAMB.

At the dinner which George Harvey gave in New-York in honor of M. Witte and Baron Rosen, a young Russian officer was seated beside H. H. Rogers.

"I admire your country," said the Russian, "because it is so peaceful. Politicians, financiers, the laboring classes, business men, ministers—all dwell amicably together, one happy family."

Mr. Rogers laughed.

"One happy family," he said. "Yes; such a happy family as P. T. Barnum, our great showman, used to exhibit.

"This family consisted of a lion, a tiger, a bear, a wolf and a lamb, all penned together in one cage."

"Remarkable," a visitor said one day to Mr. Barnum. "Remarkable, impressive, instructive. And how long have these animals dwelt together in this way?"

"Seven months," Barnum answered; "but the lamb has occasionally to be renewed."

HE GOT TOO MANY.

George Gould is most particular about and discriminating in what he smokes, according to the notion of one Newark man whose ideas failed to hitch with Mr. Gould's. The railroad man visited a machine-shop there recently to inspect a new device which he thought of installing on his lines. After his trip through the factory, he felt in his pocket for a cigar. He had none, and the manager of the concern, much chagrined, discovered that he, too, had none.

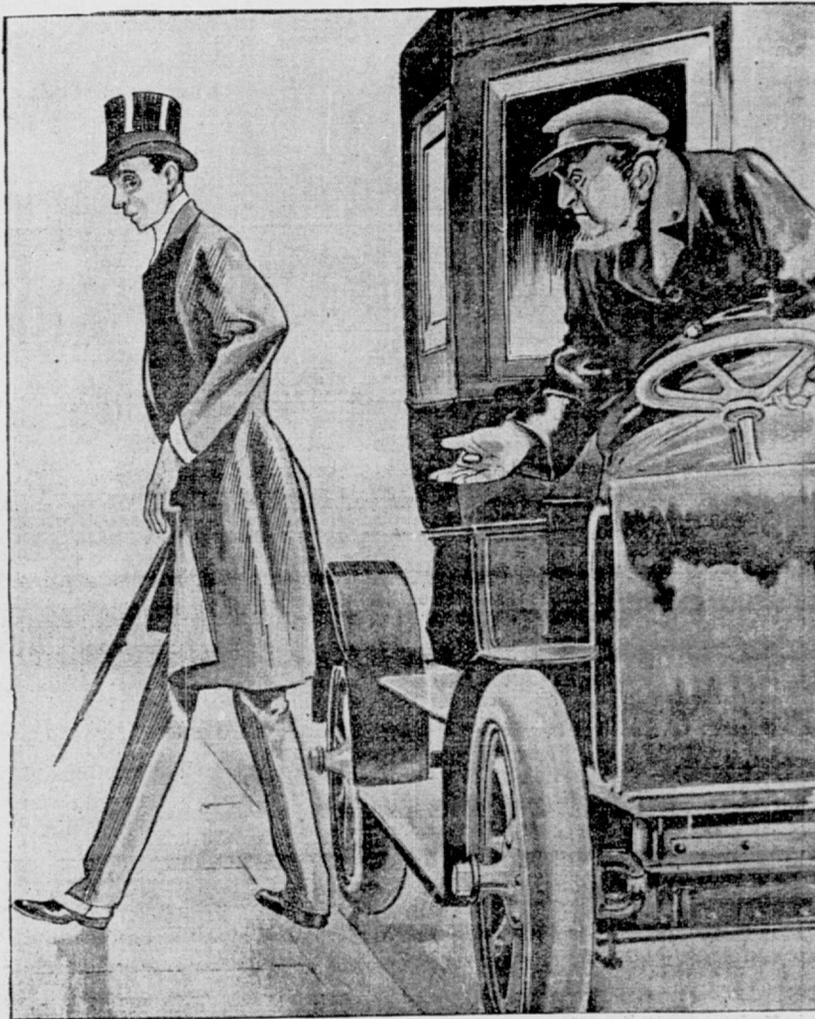
"We'll send right out and get some, though," he said.

"All right," said Mr. Gould, handing a \$2 bill to the man summoned by the manager, "go get us some cigars."

The man knew it was George Gould, and had vast ideas of the importance of the visitor, but unfortunately was not himself a smoker. He returned with a great double handful of cigars, which he passed silently to Mr. Gould.

"Why—why, what's all this?" sputtered Mr. Gould, inspecting the label, which bore the name of a highly advertised brand of "five-cent straights."

The workman tried to explain that these were as good as any he knew, but was hustled back with them. There were forty-two cigars, by actual count.



LIVE AND LET LIVE.

Small Motor-Cab Proprietor, (indignantly)—And 'ow d'yer expect a pore man to pay his fines for speeding?

—(The Bystander.)

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resumed it will be possible to pursue it steadily and continuously and with a minimum of expense and labor.

THE POLITE CHILD.

A Roslyn man was praising Clarence H. Mackay's little daughter Katherine, who has been enrolled as a pupil in the Roslyn public school, of which Mrs. Mackay is a director.

"I went to see Mrs. Mackay one day on school business," he said, "and as I was taking leave her little girl, who was playing in the hall, rose politely and opened the door for me.

"I was very much pleased with this attention. "Thank you," I said. "I am sorry to give you so much trouble."

"Oh," she answered, "I am only sorry I am not letting you in."

THE WISE NEIGHBOR.

"Peter Lorillard Ronalds, who at the age of seventy-eight has completed a one thousand mile coaching trip, is as wise as he is robust," said a resident of New-Rochelle.

"Mr. Ronalds does not believe in quarrelling or contention, and he told me the other day how, by the aid of a little thought, he once got his rights from an unreasonable and pig-headed neighbor.

"This neighbor kept chickens. The chickens were not properly penned in. Time and again they escaped, and, entering Mr. Ronalds's garden, did a deal of damage there.

"Time and again Mr. Ronalds remonstrated with the neighbor, who promised to confine his chickens better, but never kept his word.

"And here, where another man would have got mad, gone to law, quarrelled and squabbled, Mr. Ronalds smiled, and ordered his butler to bring him a dozen eggs.

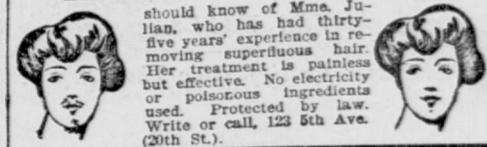
"He took these eggs into the garden, and hid

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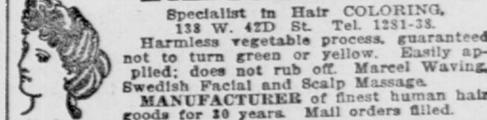
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