

The San Francisco Call

JOHN D. SPRECKELS Proprietor
CHARLES W. HORNICK General Manager
ERNEST S. SIMPSON Managing Editor

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SECRETARY KNOX is proceeding with measured step and a nice respect for international usage to discipline Zelaya. He expresses grave disapproval of the Nicaraguan government by severing diplomatic relations. He is not quite sure whether cause for war or a demand for indemnity exists. He will make sure of his ground before he proceeds to the use or threat of armed intervention.

The situation may or may not be complicated in some degree by the constitutional requirement that war shall be declared by congress and not by the executive. This limitation is wholly out of date, because wars are no longer begun by action of a deliberative body, if indeed they ever took their inception from such sources. In principle the limitation is absurd because it gives the enemy an opportunity to strike the first blow without notice, as Japan did with Russia.

These considerations do not materially affect the present case, nor, in fact, has the limitation of function cut much figure in our past dealings with the turbulent and disorderly countries that front on the Caribbean sea. The executive has usually taken his own way with them without much fussing with congress. Diplomacy is more ingenious than a corporation lawyer in finding distinctions between interference by force and arms and positive acts of war.

The summary execution of the Americans, Cannon and Groce, by Zelaya was undoubtedly an act of barbarism contrary to the practice of all civilized nations. The death penalty is no longer inflicted for political offenses anywhere outside of Russia, and these Americans were entitled to the treatment of prisoners of war subject to trial for treason by a fairly constituted civil tribunal after peace is restored. Zelaya is understood to assert a technical right to deal summarily by hasty court martial with insurgents captured in arms, but we do not believe that the United States will tolerate action on such grounds.

Frederick Palmer in his interesting series of letters printed some time ago in these columns declared as the result of his observations in Central America that the inevitable, necessary function of the United States in this regard is to exercise a temperate but firm police power over these riotous communities, who are forever fighting among themselves and disturbing the peace of their neighbors.

WHAT has become of the San Francisco hoodlum? We would not go so far as to assert that he is an extinct species, but assuredly he no longer exists in quantity. The behavior of the crowds that filled the streets during the Portola fiesta supplies convincing evidence that hoodlumism has gone out of fashion. Contrast the orderly conduct of these immense crowds with the following description of election night in Cleveland, O., quoted from a newspaper of that city:

"There never was a wilder election night crowd than that which choked downtown streets Tuesday night." This is the comment of an afternoon paper, and it is beyond doubt the truth. The rowdies were out in full force. They jostled and insulted women and girls. They threw snuff and pepper and dabbed women's faces and gowns with grease paint and lamplack. One woman's set of white fox-furs was ruined. A gang of ruffians picked young girls up and tossed them in the air.

Practically the entire police force was on duty in the downtown district, but until the acts of the hoodlums became alarming nothing was done to suppress them.

Rowdiness of this description is inconceivable in San Francisco. At the time when the New Year's night parade was first instituted there was some complaint of rudeness to women in the street, but anything of that sort was never actually vicious, and was really due to exuberance of spirits. Such as it was, public opinion and the police put a stop to it.

Most residents of San Francisco can remember the time when the outskirts of the city and the semisuburban quarters were infested by organized gangs of hoodlums, who were a terror to the neighborhood and on public occasions invaded the heart of town. These gangs have completely disappeared. The hoodlum was never very dangerous. He did not belong to the underworld, but he was ugly and vicious and likely to graduate into crime by the opium route.

NATIONAL attention will be attracted by the new plan of the Houston, Tex., municipal commission to mitigate the sorrows and tribulations of Straphanger. The sufferer has become so used to being despitely treated and trodden upon that he believes he has not a real friend in the world. He has been told that his sufferings must be taken as a matter of course because they bring rich fruit in dividends. To give him a seat would "hurt business."

The Houston commission does not think so and the other day it enacted an ordinance which decrees that the standing passenger in a crowded streetcar shall pay but 3 cents for transportation, the regular fare being as usual 5 cents.

Relief For Mr. Straphanger

Elimination Of the Hoodlum

To Keep Order in Central America

Let There Be Full Information in Water Bond Matters

THE city's legal department has prepared a dual substitute for all the pending water bonds, suggestions and propositions. This substitute involves, first, the original Hetch Hetchy proposition for \$45,000,000; second, the Spring Valley purchase proposition carrying \$35,000,000. By a proviso in the first half of proposition No. 1, if both propositions be ratified by the necessary two-thirds vote only \$23,000,000 worth of the bonds provided by proposition No. 1 shall be marketed.

Assuming that both propositions are ratified, a bond issue of \$58,000,000 will be authorized—\$35,000,000 for the purchase of the Spring Valley properties and \$23,000,000 for the development of the Hetch Hetchy project. The substitute alternative propositions eliminate many of the legal and practical objections raised against the suggested submission of three propositions. The alternative proviso apparently clears the situation of any legal objection to the bonds as exceeding the city's bonding capacity, should both propositions be ratified. It also serves, in effect, to give the voters of San Francisco an opportunity to vote indirectly for all of the three original propositions.

The Call joins in the general public's assumption that the supervisory proponents and the Spring Valley company will advocate the ratification of both propositions. With both ratified the purchase of the Spring Valley properties at Spring Valley's figure is provided for. Opposition on the part of Spring Valley to proposition No. 1 would be to invite the opposition of the Hetch Hetchy champions to proposition No. 2.

The Call assumes no attitude of hostility to the proposed plans. Neither the Call nor the public is sufficiently informed in the premises to oppose or support the alternative propositions intelligently. Presumably the representatives of the people on the one hand and the Spring Valley company on the other are not moving blindly. Presumably they are in a position to answer to the public's entire satisfaction some of the questions which must be answered before the electors of San Francisco can vote intelligently upon the most important civic problem they have ever been called upon to solve. On behalf of the voters and tax payers of San Francisco The Call purposes to put those questions to the city's representatives and to the Spring Valley company.

WHAT TITLE IS THE SPRING VALLEY COMPANY PREPARED TO PASS TO THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO?
As The Call understands Spring Valley's proposition, Spring Valley

offers to sell all its property now in use for water supply purposes. What is the extent of that property? How much of that property does the Spring Valley company own in fee? How much of that property, water sheds and catchment areas is held by Spring Valley under contract, by easement or as special privilege, which may be determined by a transfer of the Spring Valley system to the city of San Francisco or any other purchaser?

WHAT TITLE HAS SPRING VALLEY TO THE SOURCES WHICH IT PURPOSES TO CONVEY TO THE PEOPLE OF SAN FRANCISCO?

Are any of the sources liable to be lost to Spring Valley or to San Francisco as a purchaser, as the Coyote creek property was lost to the Bay Cities water company? The well owners of Santa Clara county enjoyed the Bay Cities water company from building dams and selling the water from the proposed Coyote creek reservoir on the ground that such development and sale would affect and might destroy the subterranean river supplies for their wells. The supreme court sustained their contention and their right to the subterranean rivers. The Bay Cities company was compelled to abandon. Are any of Spring Valley's properties similarly situated? If so, San Francisco must take the properties subject to the risks which the supreme court has decided can not become property rights in a private corporation or a public corporation.

These are but a few of the many questions that must be answered for the public, if the public is to be convinced that it is not asked to "buy a pig in a poke." Presumably both the city's legal and legislative representatives and Spring Valley's representatives are prepared to answer them fully and to the satisfaction of all concerned. Presumably the city's representatives have gone into these and many other questions which The Call purposes to put on behalf of the people. The answers have not been given to the public. The people of San Francisco are entitled to the fullest confidence of their own representatives. It is the public's money that is to be spent. The public must act on the faith of the representations made by their servants and Spring Valley.

The Call does not impute anything but the best of good faith on the part of all of those immediately concerned in the proposed transaction. The Call insists, however, that these and other questions which this newspaper will ask shall be answered, to the end that the public may know exactly what it is doing and that in the future there may be no charge that information was withheld—that all of the cards were not dealt above the table.

Wonderful Advance of Cuba Shown by Paper

An idea of Cuba's beauty, the progress she has made since the Spanish war and yet the air of romance the land and people still retain may be gained from the "tourist edition" of the Havana Post, a 24 page compilation of the tropic island's present position in the world of trade, her capabilities for amusing visitors and her attractions generally.

Particularly illuminating to the person who has never seen the island are the photographs and articles concerning the military and government roads that now penetrate in a dozen different directions into the interior. The mud lanes, narrow and mere lines of chuckholes, that satisfied the land before the war are contrasted with the present boulevards. Special mention is made of the many automobile roads that lead out of Havana, the boulevard from Santiago high into the mountains to a position overlooking San Juan hill and other fields of battle during the Spanish war and the historic Herradura road.

Havana is spoken of as the place where "all Havana cigars are genuine" and the term can not be doubted, for factories and fields of tobacco are shown pictorially.

Indians Are Fast Runners

The best runners in the world are said to be a race of Indians living near the gulf of California. They are known as Seris, and number only some 400, says the London Globe.

In the open country the women and children catch hares by hand without any artificial aid whatever. The men, however, look upon this as child's play, and themselves attack and capture antelope, deer and wild buffalo. The swiftest horse can not outrun these fleet footed Indians, who perform on foot the same feats as the cowboy on his bronco. An American ethnologist who lived for some time among these Indians describes one of their favorite games. It is a race between a horse and an Indian.

A boy first drives the horses around and around in an inclosed track, and when one of them has got up a good speed one of the barriers is removed and the horse dashes into the prairie at full speed. It has not gone 120 yards before the Indian has caught up with it; another 60 yards and he has bounded on its back, seized its mane with one hand and its nostrils with the other, and throws it to the ground.

Great Profits Of Express Companies

These five concerns have made exclusive contracts over 167,000 miles of railway, almost three-fourths of the entire railway lines of the United States. Their rates between the competitive points, as disclosed by evidence obtained by the interstate commerce commission and as laid before the department of justice, are fixed by a tacit if not express agreement, and there is a complete understanding as to the conditions under which the business shall be received and handled.

The sole justification the express companies have for their policy of making exclusive contracts with the railroads is found in a decision of the supreme court of the United States. Members of the interstate commerce commission say there is no justification for the agreements which the companies apparently have made between each other and which, it is asserted, are in violation of the anti-trust law.

In view of the distribution of a 300 per cent dividend by the Wells-Fargo company it seems laughable to recall that this concern, in company with the other express companies named, claimed that the net results of the express business are not as favorable today as they were some years ago. They alleged that their operating expenses have increased heavily, owing to the increased cost of transportation, the advance in wages to employes and the additional cost of maintaining their equipment.

It is quite reasonable that express rates should be materially higher than the ordinary freight rates, because otherwise the general business of the railroads would be demoralized. The express companies do not deny that their rates have been too high in the past, but they contend that the increased cost of labor has seriously cut into their profits. This is a question of fact which the commission must determine. The presumption, however, is strongly against the companies, and the matter goes to the root of the whole question concerning trusts. The defense of trusts and combinations in restraint of trade rests on the fact that they are able to effect economies of administration. Now, if the public got the benefit or part of the benefit from these economies, there would probably be no objection to these combinations. As a matter of fact, the public gets no such benefit. Rates and prices tend rather to increase than to diminish, and the cost of living advances all along the line. That is the way monopoly works, as a rule, and the extravagant profits made by Wells, Fargo & Co. supply a striking illustration of this fact.

THE SMART SET

THE Friday night dance holds the attention of the younger set this evening. It is expected to equal the first dance of the season, which was a delightful affair. Several dinner parties will precede the dance, but the dinners and the dance are informal and therefore offer the guests attractions that are sometimes missed at the larger dances. The patronesses who have been very much interested in the success of the club are Mrs. James Potter Langhorne, Mrs. George Moore, Mrs. George F. Ashton, Mrs. Wakefield Baker and Mrs. Louis Montague.

The early days of December are crowded with interesting affairs for the older set as well as the debutantes. Next Monday Mrs. George Newhall will entertain at a bridge party. Tuesday is the date for the bridge party at which Mrs. Charles Deering will preside as hostess, and on the same day Mrs. Henry Foster Dutton will entertain at a card party. The following day there will be at least two parties. The first one will be given by Mrs. Robert Sheridan. She will receive more than 100 friends at a tea, and Mrs. J. O. Tobin will preside as hostess at the luncheon for Miss Vera de Sable. The debutantes will have a luncheon December 10, at which Miss Ila Sonntag will entertain, and the list for a week includes many other attractive events.

Among those who enjoyed an informal luncheon yesterday at the St. Francis were Mr. and Mrs. George Armsby and Raymond Armsby. In another party were Miss Mollie Phelan, Mrs. Francis J. Sullivan and several friends.

Mr. and Mrs. John Alexander Hope of London, who have been visiting Mr. and Mrs. Eugene de Sable for a few weeks at El Cerrito, are at the St. Francis for a brief visit, but they expect to be established in their home at Burlingame in a few days.

Miss Marie and Miss Isabel Brewer are enjoying a visit in town as the guests of Miss Helen Ashton and her sister, Miss Bessie Ashton. They will remain over the weekend, but will leave early next week to pass the holidays at their home in Mill Valley.

Miss Marian Zeile will leave tomorrow for the east. The days preceding her departure have been crowded with pleasant affairs, but none more enjoyable than the farewell luncheon given yesterday by Miss Dorothy Van Sicken at her home in Broadway. There were less than a dozen girls at the informal party and the decorations were American beauty roses.

Miss Genevieve Harvey is the guest of her grandmother, Mrs. Eleanor Martin, at her home in Broadway and will remain over the holidays. Miss Genevieve Walker, who has been with Mrs. Martin all summer, will also remain with her for the holiday season.

Mr. and Mrs. John M. Lewis have come to town for a few days and are at the St. Francis hotel.

Raymond Ashton, who returned recently from the orient, intending to pass the holidays with his mother, Mrs. George Ashton, has decided to remain indefinitely, much to the gratification of his friends in this city.

Temperature Tests

In his address at the Middlesex hospital, Lieutenant Shackleton mentioned that some rotifers brought from the antarctic, where they lived in normal temperatures between 50 degrees and 60 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, have survived a temperature of 200 degrees Fahrenheit above zero, relates the Westminster Gazette.

Another few degrees higher, however, would have settled those wonderfully adaptable animalcules, for no living thing has yet survived the temperature of boiling water. But it is intended to test the antarctic rotifers at the other end of the heat scale, by submitting them to the temperature of liquid air—if they survive the thermometric descent to 312 degrees Fahrenheit below zero.

Microbes have emerged from a month's sojourn in liquid air temperatures as lively as ever, and it is possible that rotifers, which can be dormant for months at a time, may take a "nap" in the vicinity of the absolute zero, and resume their interrupted enjoyment of life when warmed up after their severe ordeal.

ANSWERS X TO X QUERIES

TELEGRAPH POLE—George H. Burgers of Alameda in a letter to the query department says: "The answer recently given to a San Jose correspondent on his inquiry for a method to figure out the contents of a telegraph pole is all right for some people, but is not as simple as the lumberman's, which is short and absolutely correct. It is as follows: Solution for a square pole—Square the top, square the bottom, add all together. Multiply one-sixth of the height and divide by 12. Example—A pole, but not a round one, 10 ft at the top and 8 1/2 at the bottom and 30 feet long? 8 1/2 by 8 1/2 is 70; 8 by 8 is 64; 14 by 14 is 196, which added gives 268. Multiply by 5, which is one-sixth of 30 feet, and the result is 1,340, and this divided by 12 gives 111 2/3 feet as the outside.

TO NATURALIZE—Subscriber, City. I have been in San Francisco for two years and expect to go to New York next year to live there. I want to become an American citizen. Tell me how to become such.

"An alien minor may take out his first papers on attaining the age of 18 years, but he can only become a citizen after having his first papers at least two years and having resided in the United States five years and after having attained the age of 21 years," says the naturalization law. That is, you can take out your first papers here now, and when you are in New York

and have attained the age of 21 years you can obtain your naturalization papers, provided you shall have proved to the court that you have resided five years continuously in the United States and at least one year in the state or territory in which the court in which you make your application is located.

ACT OF GOD—T. D., City. Express companies state in their receipts to shippers that they will not be responsible for damage to property by fire or flood or the act of God, etc. What is the legal interpretation of "the act of God"?

That is a legal expression and signifies any natural or accidental occurrence not caused by human negligence or intervention, such as the consequences arising from storms, lightning, tempests, earthquakes, etc., and which are deemed fatalities and losses, such as no party under any circumstances (Independently of special contract) is bound to make good to another.

MORGAN—A. S., Pacific Grove, Cal. What was the nationality of John Hunt Morgan, the confederate officer who was noted for raids? He was an American, born in Huntsville, Ala.

BIRTHDAY—A. P., Bloomfield, Cal. Want to know on what day of the week a friend was born. It was May 22, 1852. Monday.