

of the United States take about seven days to pass from one ocean to the other. This sounds like a mighty good argument for government ownership and it is not much more fallacious than some others drawn from Isthmian conditions. The President of the Panama Railroad is Col. George W. Goethals. The government caught him young, educated him at its excellent West Point school, paying him a salary while he was learning to be useful, and has been employing and paying him ever since. Like a citizen of the ideal Co-operative Commonwealth he has never had to worry about a job. The State has always employed him and paid him. While he has done his work better than others of equal rank, he has only recently begun to draw any more pay than other colonels. Sounds very socialistic, doesn't

it? And he seems to make a very good railroad president too, though the shuffling of shares in Wall Street had nothing to do with his appointment, and he hasn't got a director on his board interlocked with J. P. Morgan & Co., or the City National Bank.

The government which runs this railroad and steamship line doesn't confine its activity to big things. It will wash a shirt for one of its Canal employees at about half the price that John Chinaman doing business nearby would charge, press his clothing, or it will send a man into your home—if you live in the Zone—to chloroform any stray mosquitoes lurking there and convey them away in a bottle. It will house in an electric-lighted, wire-screened tenement, a Jamaica negro who at home lived in a basket-work shack, plastered with mud and thatched with palmetto leaves. It is very democratic too, this government, for it won't issue to Mrs. Highflyer more than three wicker arm-chairs, even if she does entertain every day, while her neighbor Mrs. Domus who gets just exactly as many never entertains at all. It can be just too mean for anything, like socialism, which we are so often told "puts everybody on a dead level."

The dream of the late Edward Bellamy is given actuality on the Zone where we find a great central authority, buying everything imaginable in all the markets of the world, at the moment when prices are lowest—an authority big enough to snap its fingers at any trust—and selling again without profit to the ultimate consumers. There are no trust profits, no middleman's profits included in prices of things bought at the Commissary stores. There are eighteen such stores in the Zone. The total business of the Commissary stores amounts to about \$6,000,000 annually. Everything is sold at prices materially less than it can be bought in the United States, yet the department



ORCHIDS ON GOV. THATCHER'S PORCH

shows an actual profit, which is at once put back into the business. A Zone housewife told me that a steak for her family that would cost at least ninety cents in her home in Brooklyn cost her forty here. Shoddy or merely "cheap" goods are not carried and the United States pure food law is strictly observed. That terrible problem of the "higher cost of living" hardly presents itself to Zone dwellers except purchasers of purely native products; those, thanks to the tourists, have doubled in price several times in the last five years. But articles purveyed by Uncle Sam are furnished to his nephews and nieces here for about one-third less than the luckless ones must pay who are sticking to the old homestead instead of faring forth to the tropics.

I have already enumerated the valuable privileges, like free quarters, light, furniture, medical service, etc., supplied to the Zone worker without charge. If all these apparent gratuities were accompanied by a rate of pay lower than that in force for like occupations in the States it might be fair to say, as one of the most careful writers on Isthmian topics says, "these form part of the contract the employee makes with the government, and are just as much part of his pay as his monthly salary". But that pay averages twenty-five per cent higher than at home. The things enumerated are looked upon by those who receive them as gratuities, and rightly so. They are, in fact, extra inducements offered by Uncle Sam to persuade men to come and work on his Canal and to keep them happy and contented while doing so.

Now the chief material argument for the socialistic state, the co-operative commonwealth, is that it will secure for every citizen comfort and contentment, so far as contentment is possible to restless human minds; that it will abolish at a stroke monopoly and privilege, purge society of parasites, add to the efficiency of labor and proportionately increase its rewards. All of which is measurably accomplished on the Canal Zone and the less cautious socialists—the well-grounded ones see the difference—are excusable for hailing the government there as an evidence of the practicability of socialism.

But it isn't—at least not quite. The incarnation of the difference between this and socialism is Col. George W. Goethals. Nobody on the Zone had



Photo by H. Miller

Courtesy National Geographic Magazine

#### THE CATASETUM SCURRA

A curiously shaped orchid rediscovered by Mrs. H. H. Rousseau

part in electing Goethals; nobody can say him nay, or abate or hinder in any degree his complete personal control of all that is done here. This is not the co-operative commonwealth we long have sought. Rather is it like the commonwealth of old with Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector—and at that Goethals has no parliament to purge.

This is a benevolent despotism, the sort of government that philosophers agree would be ideal if the benevolence of the despot could only be assured invariably and eternally. The Czar of Russia could do what is being done down there were he vested with Goethals' intolerance of bureaucracies, red-tape, parasites, grafters, disobedience and delay. But Goethals is equally intolerant of opposition, argument, even advice from below. His is the military method of personal command and personal



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

MARRIED QUARTERS AT COROZAL

responsibility. I don't believe he is over-fond even of the council of war. In a socialistic community, where every man had a voice in the government, he would last only long enough for a new election to be called. Though his popularity there is universal, it would not withstand the attacks of demagogues were there field for demagogy.

But what has been done, and is still doing, on the Zone is not socialistic, because it is done from the top, by the orders of an autocrat, instead of by an act of a town meeting. One might as well say that the patience, prudence, attention to detail, insistence on proper sanitation which enabled Japan's great General Nogi to keep his army in the field with the minimum loss from preventable sickness was all socialistic. Col. Goethals commanded an army. The Isthmus was the enemy. The army must be fed and clothed, hence the Commissary. Its communications must be kept open, hence the steamship line and the railroad. The soldiers must be housed, and as it became early apparent that the siege was to be a long one the camps were built of timber instead of tents. There is nothing new about that. Back in the fifteenth century Queen Isabella, concluding that it would take a long time to starve the Moors out of Granada, kept her soldiers busy building a city of stone and mortar before the walls of the beleaguered town. Culebra has been a more stubborn fortress than was ever Granada.

No. The organization of the Zone has been purely military, not socialistic. It was created for a purpose and it will vanish when that purpose has been attained. Admirably adapted to its end it had many elements of charm to those living under it. The Zone villages, even those like Culebra and Gorgona which are to be abandoned, were beautiful in appearance, delightful in social refinement. Culebra with its winding streets, bordered by tropical shrubbery in which nestled

the cool and commodious houses of the engineers and higher employees, leading up to the hill crested by the residence of the Colonel



FIGHTING THE INDUSTRIOUS ANT

—of course there were five colonels on the Commission, but only one "The Colonel"—Culebra was a delight to the visitor and must have been a joy to the resident.

Try to figure to yourself the home of a young engineer as I saw it. The house is two storeys with a pent-house roof, painted dark green, with the window frames, door casings and posts of the broad verandas, by which it is nearly surrounded, done in shining white. Between the posts is wire

netting and behind is a piazza probably twelve feet wide which in that climate is as good as a room for living, eating or sleeping purposes. The main body of the house is oblong, about fifty feet long by thirty to forty feet deep. A living-room and dining-room fill the entire front. The hall, instead of running from the front to the back of the house, as is customary with us, runs across the house, back



of these two rooms. It is in no sense an entry, though it has a door opening from the garden, but separates the living-rooms from the kitchen and other working rooms. The stairway ascends from this hall to the second floor where two large bed-rooms fill the front of the house, a big bath-room, a bed-room and the dry-room being in the rear. About that last apartment let me go into some detail. The climate of the



FOLIAGE ON THE ZONE

Zone is always rather humid, and in the rainy season you can wring water out of everything that can absorb it. So in each house is a room kept tightly closed with two electric lights in it burning day and night. Therein are kept all clothes, shoes, etc., not in actual use, and the combined heat and light keep damp and mold out of the goods thus stored. Mold is one of the chief pests of the Panama housekeeper. You will see few books in

even the most tastefully furnished houses, because the mold attacks their bindings. Every piano has an electric light inserted within its case and kept burning constantly to dispel the damp. By way of quieting the alarm of readers it may be mentioned again that electric light is furnished free to Isthmian Commission employees. "We always laugh", said a hostess one night, as she looked back at my darkened room in her house from the walk outside, "at the care people from the States take to turn out the lights. We enjoy being extravagant and let them burn all day if we feel like it".

In such a house there is no plaster. From within you see the entire frame of the house—uprights, joists, stanchions, floor beams, all—and the interior is painted as a rule precisely like the exterior without the white trimming. You don't notice this at first. Then it fascinates you. You think it amusing and improper to see a house's underpinning so indecently exposed. All that we cover with laths, plaster, calcimine and wall paper is here naked to the eye. Only a skin of half-inch lumber intervenes between you and the outer world, or the people in the next room. You notice the windows look strange. There is no sash. To a house of the sort I am de-

scribing four or six glass windows are allotted to be put in the orifices the housekeeper may select. The other windows are unclosed except at night, when you may, if you wish, swing heavy board shutters across them.

A house of the type I have described is known as Type 10, and is assigned to employees drawing from \$300 to \$400 a month. Those getting from \$200 to \$300 a month are assigned either to quarters in a two-family house, or to a small cottage of six or seven rooms, though, as the supply of the latter is limited, they are greatly prized. Employees drawing less than \$200 a month have four-room flats in buildings accommodating four families. Those who receive more than \$400 a month are given large houses of a type distinguished by spaciousness and artistic design.

When you come to analyze it such houses are only large shacks, and yet their proportions and coloring, coupled with their obvious fitness for the climate, make them, when tastefully furnished and decorated, thoroughly artistic homes. For these homes the Commission furnishes all the bare essentials. With mechanical precision it furnishes the number of tables, chairs, beds and dressers which the Commission in its sovereign wisdom has decided to be proper for a gentleman of the station in life to which that house is fitted. For the merely aesthetic the Commission cares nothing, though it is fair to say



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

THE CHIEF COMMISSARY AT CRISTOBAL



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

#### WHAT THE SLIDE DID TO THE RAILROAD

The pernicious activity of slides occasionally creates this novel condition in railroad construction

that the furniture it supplies, though commonplace, is not in bad taste. But for decoration the Zone dwellers must go down into their own pockets and to a greater or less degree all do so. The authorities have not gone to the extent of prohibiting this rivalry as at West Point and Annapolis where the cadets are not permitted to decorate their rooms lest inequality and mortification result. But in Panama the climate enforces such a prohibition to some extent. Luxury there would be positive discomfort. Costly rugs and hangings, richly upholstered furniture are out of place. Air space is the greatest luxury, and a room cluttered with objects of priceless art would be scarcely habitable.

Within their limitations, however, the hostesses of the Zone have made their homes thoroughly charming. The visitor was, I think, most impressed by those who frankly used the trimmings

of the tropics for their chief decorations. The orchid-lined porches of Mrs. M. H. Thatcher, wife of the civil commissioner, or Mrs. H. H. Rousseau, wife of the naval representative on the Commission, were a veritable fairyland when the swift tropic night had fallen and the colored lights began to glow among the rustling palms and delicately tinted orchids. No more beautiful apartment could possibly be imagined.

Housekeeping is vastly simplified by the Commissary. When there is but one place to shop, and only one quality of goods to select from—namely the best, for that is all the Commissary carries—the shopping tasks of the housekeeper are reduced to a minimum. Nevertheless they grumble—perhaps because women like to shop, more probably because this situation creates a dull and monotonous sameness amongst the families. "What's the good of giving a dinner party", asked a hostess plaintively,



NOT FROM JAMAICA BUT THE Y. M. C. A.

"when your guests all know exactly what everything on your table costs, and they can guess just what you are going to serve? They say, 'I wish she'd bought lamb at the Commissary, it costs just the same as turkey'. Or 'the Commissary had new asparagus today. Wonder why she took cauliflower'? They get the Commissary list just as I do and know exactly to what I am limited, as we can only buy at the Commissary. There is no chance for the little surprises that make an interesting dinner party".

That is perhaps a trifle disquieting to the adventurous housekeeper, but, except for the purpose of entertaining, the Commissary must be a great boon. Its selection of household necessities is sufficiently varied to meet every need; the quality the best and its prices are uniformly lower than in the United States.

This comparative cheapness in prices is, of course, due to the elimination of the middlemen, the buying by the commissary in large quantities and the disregard of profit as an element in the business. There is but one step between the Beef Trust, or other manufacturers, and the ultimate consumers on the Zone. The one intermediary is the Commissary. It buys in such quantities that it can be sure of the lowest prices. It buys in markets 3,000 miles or more away from its stores, but it gets the lowest freight rates and an all-water carriage from New York. Finally it pays no rent and seeks no

profit, hence its prices should be the lowest. Here is a selection from the printed list issued in April, 1913, from which any house-keeper can judge of Zone prices:



A BACHELOR'S QUARTERS

Veal Cutlets, per pound	17c
Lamb Chops, per pound	24c
Corned Beef, No. 1	14c
Sirloin Steak, per pound	19c
Halibut, fresh, per pound	15c
Chickens, fancy roasting, 5½ pounds each	\$1.25
Ducks, blackhead, pair	60c
Pork, salt, family	14c
Eggs, fresh, dozen	25c
Butter, creamery, special	41c
American Cheese, per pound	22c
Celery, per head	11c
Cabbage, per pound	3c
Onions, per pound	3c
Potatoes, white, per pound	3c
Turnips, per pound	3c
Grapefruit, each	4c
Oranges, Jamaica, per dozen	12c

If, however, the Commissary system reduces life to something of a general uniformity and destroys shopping as a subject of conversation, the ladies of the Zone still have the eternal servant problem of which to talk. De Amicis, the travel writer, said that servants formed the one universal topic for conversation and that he bid a hasty farewell to his mother in Naples after a monologue on the sins of servants, only to find, at his first dinner in Amsterdam, whither he had traveled with all possible speed, that the same topic engrossed the mind of his hostess there. In Panama the matter is somewhat simplified by the fact that only one type of servant is obtainable, namely the Jamaica negress.

It is complicated by the complete lack of intelligence offices. If a housekeeper wants a maid she asks her friends to spread the tidings to their servants, and then waits, supine, until the treasure comes to the door. Servants out of employment seek it by trudging from house to house and from village to village. Once hired they do what they have



THE GRAPE FRUIT OF PANAMA

to do and no more. Among them is none of the spirit of loyalty which makes the "old Southern mammy" a figure in our fiction, nor any of the energy which in the Northern States Bridget contributes to household life—though, indeed, Bridget is disappearing from domestic service before the flood of Scandinavians and Germans.

The only wail I heard on the Isthmus about the increasing cost of living had to do with the wages of servants. "In the earlier days", said one of my

hostesses reminiscently, "it was possible to get servants for very low wages. They were accustomed to doing little and getting little, as in Jamaica and other West Indian islands, where many servants are employed by



THE TIVOLI HOTEL



one family, each with a particular 'line'. People say that in Panama City servants can still be found who will work for \$5 a year (\$2.50) per month, and that Americans have spoiled them by paying too much. But I think they have developed a capacity for work and management equal to that of servants in the States, and deserve their increased wages. I pay \$45, gold, a month to my one capable servant. Occasionally you will find one who will work for \$10, but many get \$20 if they are good cooks and help with baby. Probably \$12 to \$15 is an average price.

"These Jamaica servants speak very English English—you can't call it Cockney, for they don't drop their h's, but it differs greatly from our American English. They are very fond of big words, which they usually use incorrectly, especially the men. A Commissary salesman, to whom I sent a note asking for five pounds of salt meat, sent back

the child who carried it to 'ask her mother to differentiate', meaning what kind of salt meat. A cook asked me once 'the potatoes to crush, ma'am'? meaning to ask if they were to be mashed. Another after seizing time to air a blanket between showers reported exultantly, 'the rain did let it sun, mum'. And always when they wish to know if you want hot water they inquire, 'the water to hot, mum'?

"Their names are usually elaborate. Celeste, Geraldine, Katherine, Eugenie, are some that I recall. My own maid is Susannah, which reminds me—without reflecting on this particular one—that as a class they are hopelessly unmoral, though extremely religious withal. I have known them to be clean and efficient, but as a rule they are quite the reverse. Some are woefully ignorant of modern utensils. One for example, being new to kitchen ranges, built a fire in the oven on the first day of her service. Another, having been carefully in-



PURE PANAMA, PURE INDIAN AND ALL BETWEEN



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OLD LANDING AT TABOGA

The concrete walls leading from the beach up to the level of the street were built as a memorial of the successful revolution of 1905.



structed always to take a visitor's card on a tray, neglected the trim salver provided for that purpose and extended to the astonished caller a huge lacquered tin tray used for carrying dishes from the kitchen.

"I'll never forget", concluded my hostess between smiles and sorrow, "how I felt when I saw that lonesome little card reposing on the broad black and battered expanse of that nasty old tray!"

Social life on the Zone is rather complex. At the apex, of course, are the Commissioners and their families. The presence of an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in Panama City adds another factor to the always vexed question of precedence, while the maintenance of a military post with a full regiment, and a marine camp with a battalion does not help to simplify matters. Social affiliations among those not in the Commission or the Army set are based with primitive simplicity upon the



Y. M. C. A. CLUB AT GATUN

These clubs are the true centers of the social life of the zone

amount of the husband's earnings. One advantage of this system is that it is based upon perfectly accurate information, for everybody on the Zone works for the Commission and the payrolls are periodically published. But it jars the ingenuous outsider to have a woman, apparently without a trace of snobbery, remark casually of another, "well, we don't see much of her. Her husband is in the \$2000 class you know".

Social life is further complicated by the fact that the people of the Zone came from all parts of the United States, with a few from Europe. They have no common home associations. When the settlement of the Zone first began the women were dismally lonely, and the Commission called in a professional organizer of women's clubs to get them together. Clubs were organized from Ancon to Cristobal and federated with Mrs. Goethals for President and Mrs. Gorgas for Vice-President. Culbra entertained Gorgona with tea and Tolstoi, and Empire challenged Corozal to an interchange of views on eugenics over the



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

INTERIOR OF GATUN Y. M. C. A. CLUB



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

#### MARINE POST AT CAMP ELLIOTT

A force of about 500 marines will be kept permanently on the Zone

coffee cups and wafers. In a recent number of *The Canal Record*, the official paper of the Zone, I find nearly a page given over to an account of the activities of the women's societies and church work. It appears that there were in April, 1913, twenty-five societies of various sorts existing among the women on the Zone. The Canal Zone Federation of Women's Clubs had five subsidiary clubs with a membership of fifty-eight. There were twelve church organizations with a membership of 239. Nearly 290 women were enrolled in auxiliaries to men's organizations. But these organizations were rapidly breaking up even then and the completion of the Canal will witness their general disintegration. They served their purpose. Only a mind that could mix the ideal with the practical could have foreseen that discussions of the Baconian Cipher, or the philosophy of Nietzsche might have a bearing on the job of digging a canal, but whoever conceived the idea was right.

The same clear foresight that led the Commission to encourage the establishment of women's clubs caused the installation of the Y. M. C. A. on the Isthmus, where

it has become perhaps the dominating social force. With a host of young bachelors employed far away from home there was need of social meeting places other than the saloons of Panama and Colon. Many schemes were suggested before it was determined to turn over the whole organization of social clubs to the governing body of the Y. M. C. A. There were at the period of the greatest activity on the Zone seven Y. M. C. A. clubs located at Cristobal, Gatun, Porto Bello,



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

#### TOURISTS IN THE CULEBRA CUT

Gorgona, Empire, Culebra and Corozal. The buildings are spacious, and, as shown by the illustrations, of pleasing architectural style. On the first floor are a lobby, reading-room and library, pool and billiard room, bowling alley, a business-like bar which serves only soft drinks, a quick lunch counter, and in some cases a barber shop and baths. On the second floor is always a large assembly-room used for entertainments and dances. This matter of dancing was at first embarrassing to the Y. M. C. A., for at home this organization does not encourage the dreamy mazes of the waltz, and I am quite sure frowns disapprovingly on the swaying tango and terrible turkey trot. But conditions on the Isthmus were different and though the organization does not itself give dances, it permits the use of its halls by other clubs which do. The halls also are used for moving picture shows, concerts and lectures.

The Superintendent of Club Houses, Mr. A. B. Dickson, acts as a sort of impresario, but the task of filling dates with desirable attractions is rather a complicated one 2000 miles away from the lyceum bureaus of New York.

The service of the Y. M. C. A. is not gratuitous. Members pay an annual fee of \$10 each. This, however, does not wholly meet the cost of maintenance and the deficit is taken care of by the Commission, which built the club houses at the outset.

That the service of the organization is useful is shown by the fact that Col. Goethals has recommended the erection of a concrete club house to cost \$52,500 in the permanent town of Balboa.

Social intercourse on the Zone is further impeded by the fact that the few thousand "gold" employees are scattered over a strip of territory 43 miles long traversed by a railroad which runs

but three passenger trains daily in each direction. Dances are held on alternate Saturday nights at the Tivoli and Washington Hotels and guests cross from the Atlantic to the Pacific or vice-versa to attend them, but on these nights a special train takes the merrymakers home. If, however, a lady living at Culebra desires to have guests from Cristobal to dinner, she must keep them all night, while a popular bachelor with half a dozen dinner or party calls to make needs about three



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

LOBBY IN TIVOLI HOTEL

uninterrupted days to cover his list.

Church work, too, has been fostered by the Commission. Twenty-six of the churches are owned by it, and all but two are on land it owns. In 1912 there were forty churches on the Zone—seven Roman Catholic, thirteen Episcopal, seven Baptist, two Wesleyan and eight undenominational. Fifteen chaplains are maintained by the government, apportioned among the denominations in proportion to their numbers. Much good work is done by the

churches, but one scarcely feels that the church spirit is as strong as it would be among the same group of people in the States. The changed order of life, due to the need of deferring to tropical conditions, has something to do with this. The stroll home from church at midday is not so pleasant a Sunday function under a glaring tropical sun. Moreover no one town can support churches of every denomination, and the railroad is at least impartial in that it does not encourage one to go down the line to church any more than to a dance or the theater.

Even as I write the disintegration of this society has begun. On the tables of the Zone dwellers you find books about South America or Alaska—the widely separated points at which opportunity for engineering activity seems to be most promising. Alaska particularly was at the time engaging the speculative thought of the young engineers in view of the discussion in Congress of the advisability of building two government railroads in that territory.



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

ALTAR IN GATUN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The preparation of moving thither the Canal organization was highly pleasing to the younger men who seemed to think that working over glacial moraines and running lines over snow fields would form a pleasing sequel to several years in the tropical jungles and swamps. You will see on the Isthmus bronzed and swarthy men who are pointed out to you as "T T's" which is to say tropical tramps who served first in the Philippines. Just what appellation will be given those who go from the tropics to the arctic is yet to be discovered. In the *Canal Record* I read of the final dissolution of the Federation of Women's Clubs. Stories of

the ambitions of individual commissioners for new employment are appearing in the public prints. Only the pernicious activity of the slides at Culebra and Cucaracha can much longer delay the dissolution of the social life that has so pleasingly flourished under the benevolent despotism of Col. Goethals.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LABOR AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ZONE



BY its provision for the comfort of the unmarried employees the Isthmian Commission has justified the allegation that it systematically encourages matrimony among the men. The bachelor employee upon the gold roll is housed in large barracks which rarely afford him a room to himself, but ordinarily force upon him one, two or even three "chums." The intimacies of chumming are delightful when sought, but apt to be irksome when involuntary. The bachelor quarters house from twelve to sixty men, and are wholly made up of sleeping rooms. The broad screened verandas constitute the only living room or social hall. If that does not serve the young bachelor's purpose he has the Y. M. C. A. which is quite as public. In fact, unless he be one of the few favored with a room to himself, he must wander off, like a misanthrope, into the heart of the jungle to meditate in solitude. As hard outdoor work does not make for misanthropy most of them wander off to the church and get married.

The unmarried employees take their meals in what are called Commission Hotels, though these

are hotels only in the sense of being great eating houses. Here men and women on the gold roll are served, for there are bachelor girls on the Zone and at these hotels special veranda tables are reserved for them and for such men as retain enough of the frills of civilization as to prefer wearing their coats at their meals. Meals for employees cost thirty cents each, or fifty cents for non-employees. There is some divergence of judgment concerning the excellence of this food. Col. Roosevelt, while on the Isthmus, evaded his guides, dashed into a Commission hotel and devoured a thirty-cent meal, pronouncing it bully and declaring it unapproachable by any Broadway meal at \$1.00. The Colonel sincerely believed that his approach was unheralded, but they do say on the Zone that his descent was "tipped off" like a raid in the "Tenderloin," and that a meal costing the contractors many times thirty cents was set before him.

Undoubtedly one who should order the same variety of dishes in a city restaurant in the States would have to pay more than fifty cents, although there are country hotels in which equal variety and excellence for the price are not unattainable. A typical dinner menu includes soup, two kinds of meat, four kinds of vegetables, hot rolls or light bread, a salad, tea, coffee, or cocoa and for dessert pie or ice cream. The Isthmian appetite for ice



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

LA BOCA FROM THE CITY







*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

#### NEGRO QUARTERS AT CRISTOBAL

The Jamaica negroes frequently elect to live in the shacks rather than the commission barracks

guests, criticism would be perhaps ungenerous. As for native fruits and food, you must go away from the hotel to seek them. An infrequent papaya appears on the menu, but for the mamei, mango, sapodilla and other fruits, the guests at the time of my visit sought the native fruit stores.

After all, however, the two big hotels are the least of the tasks imposed on the Subsistence Department. The string of Commission hotels, 18 in all, serve about 200,000 meals monthly. There are also 17 messes for European laborers who pay 40 cents per ration of three meals a day. Sixteen kitchens serve the West India laborers who get three meals for 27 cents. About 100,000 meals of this sort are served monthly. Receipts and expendi-

tures for the line hotels, messes and kitchens are very nicely adjusted. The Official Handbook puts receipts at about \$105,000 a month; expenditures, \$104,500. The Tivoli Hotel earns a profit, but the Washington Hotel, being newly built, had not at the time of publication of this book made a financial report.

As I have noted, the hotels are not open to all sorts and conditions of men. Those which I have described are established for the use of gold employees only. Different methods had to be adopted in providing lodging and eating places for the more than 30,000 silver employees, most of whom belong to the unskilled labor class. About 25,000 of the silver employees are West Indians, mainly from



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

LABOR TRAIN AT ANCON

Jamaica or the Barbados, though some French are found. A very few Chinese are employed. In 1906 Engineer Stevens advertised for 2500 Chinese coolies, and planned to take 15,000 if they offered themselves, but there was no considerable response. Perhaps the story of the unhappy Chinamen who destroyed themselves during the French régime rather than live on the Isthmus may have been told in the Flowery Kingdom and deterred others from

coming. But few Japanese laborers are enrolled, which is the more strange when the part they took in railroad building in the Pacific northwest is remembered.

In all forty nationalities and eighty-five geographical subdivisions were noted in the census of 1912. Greenland is missing, but if we amend the hymn to "From Iceland's icy mountains to India's coral strand," it will fit the situation. When work was busiest the West Indian laborers were paid 10 cents an hour, for an eight-hour day, except in the case of those doing special work who got 16 and 20 cents. The next higher type of manual labor, largely composed of Spaniards, drew 20 cents. Artisans received from 16 to 44 cents an hour. In figuring the cost of work it was the custom of the engineers to reckon the West Indian labor as only 33 per cent as efficient as American labor. That is to say, \$3 paid to a Jamaican produced no greater results than \$1 paid to an American. Reckoned by results therefore, the prices paid for native labor were high.

Quarters and a Commissary service were of course provided for the silver employees. Their quarters were as a rule huge barracks, though many of the natives and West Indians spurn the free quarters provided by the Commission and make their homes in shacks of their own. This is particularly the case with those who are married, or living in the free unions not uncommon among the Jamaica negroes. The visitor who saw first the trim and really attractive houses and bachelor quarters assigned to the gold employees could hardly avoid a certain revulsion of opinion as to the sweetness and light of Isthmian life when he wandered into the negro quarters across the railroad in front of the Tivoli Hotel at Ancon, or in some of the back streets



NEGRO SLEEPING QUARTERS

All extra clothing etc., is piled on shelf above. The floor is flushed daily

of Empire or Gorgona. The best kept barracks for silver employees were at Cristobal, but even there the restlessness and independence of the Jamaicans were so great that many moved across into the frame rookeries of the native town of Colon.

In the crowded negro quarters one evidence of the activities of the sanitation department was largely missing. No attempt was made to screen all the barracks and shacks that housed the workers. But the self-closing garbage can, the oil-sprinkled gutters, the clean pavement and all the other evidences of the activities of Col. Gorgas' men were there. Perhaps the feature of the barracks which most puzzled and amused visitors to the Zone were the kitchens. Imagine a frame building 300 feet long by 75 feet wide, three stories high with railed balconies at every story. Perched on the rails of the balustrades, at intervals of 20 feet, and usually facing a door leading into the building are boxes of corrugated iron about 3 feet high, the top sloping upward like one side of a roof and the inner side open. These are the kitchens—one to each family. Within is room for a smoldering fire of soft coal, or charcoal, and a few pots and frying pans. Here the family meal is prepared, or heated up if, as is usually the case, the ingredients are obtained at the Commissary kitchen.

The reader may notice that the gold employees are supplied with food at a fixed price per meal; the silver employees at so much per ration of three meals. The reason for this is that it was early discovered that the laborers were apt to economize by irregularity in eating—seldom taking more than two meals a day and often limiting themselves to one, making that one of such prodigious proportions as to unfit them for work for some hours, after which they went unfed until too weak to work properly. As the Commission lost by this practice at both ends, the evil was corrected by



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

A WORKMEN'S SLEEPING CAR

making the laborers pay for three meals, whether they ate them or not—and naturally they did. It is a matter of record that the quality of the work improved notably after this expedient was adopted.

The gold messes are principally for the foreign laborers, Italians, Spaniards and Portuguese, and pains are taken to give them food of the sort they are accustomed to at home. Spaghetti is consumed by the ton, as well as rice, garlic, lentils and other vegetables sought by the people of southern Europe.



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

A WORKMEN'S DINING CAR



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

#### OLD FRENCH BUCKET DREDGES

Some of these dredges are still in use for wet dredging

In 1909 the Commission reported with satisfaction that "the rations at the messes for European laborers have been increased, among the additions being wine three time a week instead of twice a week". This record of accomplishment suggests some account of the way in which the problem of the liquor traffic was handled on the Zone during the most active period of construction work and prior to the order abolishing all liquor selling. The problem was a difficult one, for the Zone was in effect a government reservation, and under a general law of Congress the sale of liquor on such reservations is prohibited. But on this reservation there were at divers times from 34 to 63 licensed saloons. July 1, 1913, all licenses were canceled and the Zone went "dry". The earlier latitude granted to liquor sellers was excused by the necessities of the case. The Spanish

and Italian laborers were accustomed to have wine with their meals and were not contented without it. But at the later date the end of the work was in sight. There was no longer need to secure contented labor at the expense of violating a national statute. Hence the imposition of a stern prohibition law.

That system of regulating the sale of liquor on the Canal Zone is brimful of anomalies and inconsistencies, but fairly

well characterized by a robust common sense. There is no liquor sold or served at the Commissary hotels or kitchens, with the result that the Spanish and Italian laborers to some extent refuse to patronize either, but get their meals at some cantina where the wine of their country can be had. There is no bar at the Hotel Tivoli. That tavern being owned by the United States government and in a government reservation the law is nominally obeyed. But



OLD FRENCH BRIDGE AT BAS OBISPO

as the tastes of men are not fixed by law, and only imperfectly regulated by it, you will find the tables of this hospitable inn plentifully dotted by comfortable looking bottles. According to report the hotel authorities "send out" to some mysterious spot for these supplies as ordered, but I never happened to see the messenger of Bacchus on his errand and rather suspect that the hotel cellar contains the cheering spring. At any rate the United States as a hotel-keeper does not encourage liquor drinking at a bar, though it does not absolutely prohibit it at table.

The saloons of the Zone, viewed superficially, seemed to be conducted for the convenience and comfort of the day laboring class—the silver employees—mainly. The police regulations made any particular attractiveness other than that supplied by their stock in trade quite impossible. They could not have chairs or tables—"perpendicular drinking" was the rigid rule. They could not have cozy



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

BAS OBISPO AS THE FRENCH LEFT IT

corners, snuggeries, or screens—all drinking must be done at the bar and in full view of the passers-by. Perhaps these rules discouraged the saloonkeepers from any attempt to attract the better class of custom. At any rate the glitter of mirrors and of cut glass was notably absent and the sheen

of mahogany was more apparent in the complexions of the patrons than on the woodwork of the bar. They were frankly rough, frontier whisky shops, places that cater to men who want drink rather than companionship, and who when tired of standing at the bar can get out. Accordingly most of the saloons were in



THE RELAXATION OF PAY DAY



CONVICTS BUILDING A COMMISSION ROAD

The excellence of these roads should be an object lesson to Central America

the day laborer quarters, and it was seldom indeed that a "gold employee" or salaried man above the grade of day laborer was seen in one. The saloons paid a high license tax which was appropriated to the schools of the Zone, and they were shut sharp at eleven o'clock because, as the chief of police explained, "we want all the laborers fit and hearty for work when the morning whistle blows".

That is the keynote of all law and rule on the Zone—to keep the employees fit for work. If morals and sobriety are advanced why so much the better, but they are only by-products of the machine which is set to grind out so many units of human labor per working day.

Unhappily all the safeguards made and provided on the Zone are missing in the code by which the saloons of Colon and Panama are regulated—if a wide-open policy is to be described as regulation. These two towns at the two ends of the Panama

Railroad are, one or the other, within an hour's ride of any village on the line. Their saloons are many, varied and largely disreputable. The more sequestered ones have attached to them the evils which commonly hang about low drinking places, and the doors swing hospitably open to the resident of the Zone, whether he be a Canal worker or a soldier or marine from one of the camps.

The uniformed men are more in evidence than they ought to be—more than they would be if an erratic and uninformed public sentiment at home had not led Congress to close the army canteens in which the soldier could have his beer or light wine amid orderly surroundings. If the good ladies of the W. C. T. U. who hold the abolition of the army canteen one of their triumphs could see the surroundings into which the enlisted man is driven, and know the sort of stuff he is led to drink, they might doubt the wisdom of their perfected work. But