

YOUNG AMERICAN PIONEERS GO TO PERU, GATEWAY TO OIL FIELDS, TO ACQUIRE WEALTH

By JAMES C. HICKEY in
New York Sun

Talara, Peru—This is not one of the show places of the world. It has no bait to attract tourists and scant hotel accommodations for any who do come. The gateway to one of the largest oil fields in South America and next to Callao in the Peruvian export and import tables, Talara carries on its business with a minimum of noise and bustle. It is a port of about 5,000 people, set at the foot of parched brown hills, with the masts of a wrecked United States steel freighter sticking up out of the water near the harbor.

Yet hundreds of travelers will remember dusty little Talara better than some shining cities they have seen. Here we who came from the north by way of the Panama Canal set foot for the first time on the soil of South America. Here, less than five degrees below the equator we made our first acquaintance with that rainless and barren coast, backed by equally barren mountains, which stretches with little change of aspect or climate almost 2,000 miles to the south. Talara is the door of a new world.

The weather is a dry topic for conversation hereabouts, but they have one good rain story. About three times in a century the Humboldt Current, that cool ocean stream from the antarctic which leaves the shores of Peru and conspires with the lofty Andes to turn a tropical and naturally fertile land into a temperate desert, wanders from its ancient course. Then for a year or two there is a season of heavy rain. The last time this happened was in 1924 and 1925. It rained so hard and so long that grass sprang up on the Talara golf links, where never a spear of grass had grown before. Nobody could explain where the seed came from, but there was the grass. Before the rains ceased it grew so thick and tall that a player occasionally lost a ball in it. That won't happen again in this generation.

Forces of Capital

Not only is this bit of coast typical of the whole littoral of Peru and northern Chili, but Talara itself is a good specimen of a type—the "camp," as it is invariably called, where live the men of the northern races who are developing the rich mineral resources of this southern continent. In Talara it is oil, in Chanaral or Braden copper, in Tocopilla nitrate; the camps are all models worth studying. No one who has seen them and their surroundings will accuse the foreign capitalists of merely exploiting the country. The oil and mining corporations have built docks, roads, schools, hospitals and good houses and raised their native workmen to new standards of living.

In some of the camps Americans predominate; others are almost wholly English. Americans were scarce on the West Coast until recent years; now their numbers are steadily increasing. The success of the new Guggenheim process for extracting nitrate from the ore is a factor in this change. In Talara there are many Canadians since the International Petroleum Company, which operates the refinery here and the wells in nearby Negritos and Lagunitas, is a Canadian corporation. It is a Standard Oil subsidiary. The other Talara "gringos" are Americans, English and Scotch.

A big wooden arch divides the camp proper from the town, as the native quarter is called. In the camp are the pretty bungalows of the foreign and upper class Peruvian employees of the company, also an attractive clubhouse. In the town are the canchones, where live the Indian laborers and their families. The canchones are rows of wooden apartments, small but comfortable and clean, and in some cases equipped with gas stoves for cooking. The Indians seem to feel that they have more room than they need, for often they bring in so many of their relatives to live with them that the walls are in danger of bursting. Occasionally the company orders a grand

housecleaning and the free lodgers are unceremoniously hustled out of town.

What They Do

There is a small colony of fishermen on the shore, the men of which fish entirely for the company. The town has an airy and neat public market, which is visited by most of the tourists who come ashore for an hour or two from the Grace Line ships. Here the primitive life in the midst of modern industrialism. Some of the scale men which purchases are weighed might have been dug out of an Inca ruin. Children buy sticks of sugarcane to suck in lieu of lollypops. A dignified Indian sits on a mammoth gourd with a few dozen eggs spread out on a blanket at his feet—his whole stock in trade.

The company maintains excellent free school in both camp and town. The Indian children are coming to their classes in growing numbers. Many of them are good students, but it is hard to impress upon them the importance of regular attendance. Six hundred and ten out of a registration of 880 was the daily average recently. The young men are learning to play the white man's athletic games, especially soccer football, which is popular all over South America. The recent Olympic football matches at Amsterdam caused almost as much excitement in this part of the world as it does a championship baseball series in the United States.

Interesting as the town is, the camp will longer hold the attention of the traveler from the North. He will have many questions to ask—about the water that is piped down from the Chira River in the hills; about the babies brought up on powdered milk in a land where cows' milk often is next to impossible to obtain. He will wonder about the lives of these men and women of his race, transplanted to this strange desert ground. Are they as contented as they appear to be, especially the women, with servants to be had for a song and no work to occupy their minds? Here in their bright little houses, with the religiously watered flower gardens, do they think of anything but the day when the contract will expire and they can board a ship for home?

Radio a Failure

Answers to these questions are hard to get, yet it may be said that, apart from the isolation, the lives of the people in the camps are far from unpleasant. The companies do everything possible, short of bringing the United States or England down to South America, to make the jobs attractive. They choose their men with care, rejecting all applicants who seem to be of the sort that might blow up or that wouldn't stick. A little further weeding out in the camp itself is sometimes necessary. This insures a personnel of an unusually fine type.

The big incentive is the chance to save money. The contract men get their house rent free and have no electric light or gas bill to pay. In Talara the company even furnishes some vegetables without charge, having a truck farm back in the valley where the water comes from. There isn't much left to buy, except clothes. At the end of three years a man ought to have a tidy sum put by. Some do and some don't. The International and many other companies offer a four months' vacation and free transportation home to a desirable man if he will sign up for another term.

For amusement there are athletic games, dancing and bridge—especially dancing and bridge. In all the camps from the equator to Cape Horn there may be some lost soul who doesn't dance; if there is the world may pity him. As for bridge, nowhere on earth it is a more serious business than on the West Coast. The radio may be said not to exist; the static is so strong on this side of South America that the loudest jazz cannot penetrate it. One man in Talara who owns a short wave set reported, however, that he heard the Republicans scrapping over the farm plank in Kansas City.

Women and Clothes

The great problem with the women

is clothes. When a man comes down here to do a three-year trick he brings enough clothes to last him until his time is up. If he has children he carries along shoes big enough to accommodate their growing feet, with other garments in progressive sizes. Women, as is well known, want new clothes all the time and will have them. Without going into details it may be said that they get them in the West Coast camps as elsewhere. In spite of all difficulties they look remarkably well. To the masculine eye at least they seem as well dressed as the majority of women in the States.

There is something that brings men back to the coast when they think they have left it for good—not only to pleasant cities like Lima and Santiago or to drowsy little ports where life drifts along and along, but to camps in the mountains and by the sea, where there is hard shovel work to be done. As a rule it is not the money that draws them. It may be the pioneer spirit. Most of them will tell you they don't know what it is. A few say the attraction of the country itself, and the traveler, incredulous at first, begins before long to believe them.

BIRKENHEAD IN BRITISH LORDS DEFENDS POLICE

London, July 30—The Earl of Birkenhead has once more astonished the dignified House of Lords and the newspapers by his forceful frankness.

What is described by most of the press as a remarkable defence of the police force over the Sir Leo Money case is being given the fullest publicity because of the manner in which he dealt with Sir Leo's position. Replying to labor attacks on police records he said he found it necessary to speak plainly.

He pointed out that if an elderly man takes a young girl, thirty years younger than himself, to lunch at a restaurant in Soho, the girl not belonging to the same class, and not sharing, if one may surmise, "his intellectual or economical interests and sits in close proximity to her in Hyde Park, and if there takes place between them some caress of a kind distinguished by the young lady herself in evidence as being a kiss—but not a kiss of passion—have they got a very great ground for complaint if a policeman, who is forty or fifty yards away, misinterprets the precise character of the caress?

"Do not let the noble Lords delude themselves," continued Birkenhead, "it is not our habit to frequent Hyde Park, in those disputable hours. I am not therefore in a position to give an actual experience or advice, but I am informed that there is no park in Europe in which so much indecorum can be witnessed as in Hyde Park.

"Why am I and the press to be lashed into a state of hysterical indignation because two people most indiscreetly placed themselves in an equivocal position. I have derived great pleasure throughout my life in seeing young people enjoy themselves, but if, with such disparity, an acquaintance, which I accept as entirely innocent, is maintained under these somewhat unusual and almost Bohemian circumstances, misunderstandings are very likely to arise.

Birkenhead ended his speech by beating his despatch box and declaring: "The charges of perjury against the police force I think absolutely repel. There is no finer and more honest or honorable body of police in the world."

MORE ABOUT MEN

Oh you sicken me sometimes—The things you say and do! And at the close of each affair I swear that I am through. Yet in spite of resolutions I always come back for more (This one's sure to be different—Forgotten's the vow I swore.) But you're all of a deadly sameness So obvious, trite and such You don't interest me in the slightest Well—at least that is not much!

"Did you ever see a Rembrandt?" "Did I see one? I've had rides in 'em."

SEVENTEEN YEAR LOCUST ON HAND PROMPTLY ACCORDING TO THE SCIENTIFIC FORECAST

(New York Sun)

On time to the day and hour, the seventeen-year locust is on the job in Southern New York, across the Hudson in New Jersey, in New England and in some of the Southern States. Only a little while ago the scientific sharks issued warning to farmers and horticulturists that the seventeen-year pests were about due, and named the date to look for them. And here they are!

The seventeen-year locust has few virtues but one of them is punctuality. He is punctual at his own birth and punctual at his own funeral. There are no Jimmy Walkers in the seventeen-year locust family.

Since the days of the early Egyptian kings—long before they laid Tut-Ankh-amen away among his gilded trappings—this loud-mouthed insect has been coming in clouds every seventeen years, no more, no less. If we had a seventeen-year clock we could time it by him with dependable exactness, for the winged rascal is as exact as a mathematical formula.

It's one of the strangest little kinks in natural philosophy that it should be seventeen years between appearances, and not ten years or twenty-seven years. There must be a reason tucked away in the inner consciousness of that strange old person, Dame Nature.

Just as we know the locust, so did the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and Assyrians, the Greeks, Romans, and medieval peoples know him. In tradition and literature—even in poetry—his exact eccentricity has been immortalized. His very scientific name "Magicicada" carries a peculiar significance, though he wasn't the locust that played hob with the Pharaoh's crops in the Old Testament days when the people of Israel were trying to make Meneptha understand that they were kidding when they said they wanted to travel and improve their minds. The plague locusts were birds of another feather.

Problems to be Faced

One wonders if the seventeen-year locust doesn't get an awful shock now and then, what with the rapidly changing surface of the earth and the spread of mankind's institutions over its face. Suppose old seventeen-

year went to sleep (as he did) back in 1911 up in Westchester, somewhere, in an open field, with not a house, much less a village for miles around and came to in 1928 under a paved sidewalk, with a foot of crushed stone and asphalt to break before he could taste the sweet air and sunlight. Millions of the poor things have to face that problem, one may guess, and it seems like a tough break somehow for a poor insect.

Right here in New York, at St. George in Staten Island, is one of the world's great authority on the whole locust family. When this man talks to you about the domestic habits and personal idiosyncrasies of the seventeen-year locust or any other kind of locust you can take his word for it. He knows. His name is W. T. Davis and there are plenty of people alive in the scientific colonies that speak his name with awe. He has named half the varieties of cicada that have been found in North America and he has written stacks of United States Government and New York State bulletins about them—all crowded with pieces of useful information about how to get along peaceably and happy with locusts. As a matter of fact he doesn't think so badly of the seventeen-year-old locust. He says the poor seventeen-year is more to be pitied than censured—a queer wisp of fate.

"In the first place," says Mr. Davis, "the seventeen-year locust isn't a locust at all, properly speaking. It is a cicada. It has a sucking mouth, whereas locusts bite. About the only damage it does is to lay its eggs upon twigs and stems. It arrives in enormous broods, but the different broods do not arrive simultaneously. Each brood is true, however, to its own peculiar seventeen-year-span.

When Broods Overlap

"In some places one brood may overlap another whose cycle ends at a different time, so that particular locality might have more than one visitation of the seventeen year locust within the period of seventeen years. This arrival belongs to what we call brood No. 2 and it is so widespread that this year is locust year up and down the country.

"The armies are now in full force

in many States and the trunks of trees, the twigs of bushes and the stalks of grass are fairly alive with these crawling pupae. The dust fairly whispers to the swish of millions of crawling feet. And under foot the ground is covered, like a sea beach, with shells—the shells of thin, glistening covering discarded by the locusts. Of course they damage some young trees and they may do a little injury to oaks, hickories and horse chestnuts, but crops and shrubbery generally suffer little and young and valuable trees can be covered with cheesecloth.

"The locusts appear in colonies. They come from the eggs of the last generation. All New Jersey is full of them, along with Staten Island and Westchester, and the air is vocal with their strident choruses. A colony in full blast sounds like the hum of giant machinery and can be heard for half a mile on a clear day. They can keep that song up from sunrise to sundown when the weather is fine and they are feeling good.

"For some days before the young locusts appear people who know where to look for their arrival will find little cones of mud in damp localities—cones of from one inch to three inches high. These tiny turrets are thrown up by the baby locust so that its deep cell may be kept dry while it is preparing for its great transformation. In dry ground it does not have to build these little turrets. It comes directly out of the ground when it is ready to appear. Usually it selects late afternoon for making its bow to the world. It crawls up a tree or a bush for a few feet, then bursts its skin, leans backward, struggles free from the old dress and waves its new, wet crumpled wings to get them dry and ready for use. That takes an hour or a little more. Then it crawls higher, out of harm's way, and looks the situation over. Next day it can fly, and in another day it can sing. Song continues through June and well into July. Then it grows faint and ceases, and millions of cicada die and fall to the ground, to mix with the dead leaves and soil. But they have done their work—laid their eggs—and seventeen years afterward their children will repeat the story. A short life and a merry one."

—Tunney and Dempsey have both started they are willing to fight again "if the public wants them to." Well, the public does want them to, but it hopes for goodness sake they'll go out back of the barn next time.

Think this over!

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