One of the many outposts in Cartagena harbor

Featuring Our Interests in

COLOMBIA

South America
Where the Magdalena Flows

A Glance at the problems encountered in taming a baby land—Riches and jungle the offsetting features of Colombia

By ARTHUR R. REICH

THE development work which Imperial Oil Limited, through the International Petroleum Company, has carried on in Colombia during the past four years has tended to materially increase interest in this part of the South American continent, and heightened curiosity relative to other salient features of which the casual reader has little knowledge. He usually thinks of Colombia as a mountainous country, geographically located so that it forms the northwestern corner of the continent, and assumes that her chief source of revenue is derived from the exploitation of her precious metals—principally gold and platinum.

For purpose of a better understanding, let it be understood that Colombia comprises an area of about 450,000 square miles, which ranks it as the fourth largest country in area in South America. The mountains cover about two-fifths of the country. The ranges are the northern terminus in South America of the great Andean range, and from the Ecuadorian border in Southern Colombia fork in three directions, forming in Colombia three distinct ranges, known locally as the Western, Central and Eastern Cordilleras.

The great plateaus in this lofty mountain chain serve as a gigantic water shed for the rivers of Colombia, which flow from here west to the Pacific, east to the Atlantic by way of the Amazon River, and north to the Caribbean Sea.

Of these rivers the greatest and economically the most important is the Magdalena River and its tributary, the Cauca River. The Magdalena flows north; the Cauca, northeast until it converges with the Magdalena near El Banco, two hundred miles above the mouth of the Magdalena at Barranquilla. The Atrato River flows from the same source but to the northwest, and is of lesser importance. There are in addition innumerable rivers which comprise the eastern group and which eventually converge into the Orinoco and the Amazon Rivers. These bear little economic importance at the present time, flowing through territory but partially explored, and of which little is known, though the area concerned constitutes more than half of Colombia.

The Magdalena and Cauca Rivers running in almost parallel courses, drop from a height of about fourteen thousand feet. The Magdalena is about a thousand miles long, and is navigable from Barranquilla on the Caribbean Sea, for a distance of about five hundred and fifty miles to La Dorada. The rapids at Honda, near La Dorada, prevent continuous navigation, which is resumed again at Belmira for a further distance of about ninety miles to Girardot. In times of high water, navigation is possible as far as Neiva, a hundred miles further. Continuously shifting sand bars prevent navigation on the Magdalena by any but shallow draught steamers. The farthest point reached, Neiva, is about 1500 feet above sea level.

The Cauca River enters a long, narrow, fertile valley at an altitude of 4500 feet. It is navigable for shallow draught boats for two hundred miles.
The river is then rendered impassable on account of the swift rapids which cover a length of about two hundred and fifty miles of its course. For two hundred miles below the rapids the river is again navigable to the junction with the Magdalena.

The most important agricultural section of Colombia is in the district of the Eastern Cordillera. This range is in this respect the most developed. It contains immense areas of elevated valley land at a height above sea level which places them in the temperate zone. The most fertile and highly cultivated of these valleys, called locally the "sabana," has an area of 2,000 square miles, is blessed with a mild temperature, and produces most of the farm products of the temperate zone. It is in this district that the greater part of the white population of Colombia resides. The original Spanish settlers who came to Colombia in pursuit of gold soon left the heat and fever of the coastal areas for the cooler and healthier elevations, centering their activities in Bogota, which is the greatest capital, situated in the heart of the "sabana" already mentioned.

Bogota has until recently been so isolated and inaccessible that descendents of the original Spaniards may have suffered less intrusion by other racial types and consequently guarded and retained the old Spanish characteristics, blood, type and culture to a greater extent than any other part of Colombia and perhaps the entire continent.

This city has, as a consequence, long enjoyed a reputation as the ideal in education and culture in this part of South America. The form of education, however, has in the main been confined to musical and literary subjects and effort. Colombian authors maintain an enviable position in literature as compared with the sister republics.

Serious effort in the subject of engineering, mathemates, etc., has been made but is traceable to a comparatively recent date. Manual training is an even more recent innovation. Such changes in technical and industrial system have taken place since the time when education was placed in the hands of the Public Instruction, which was one of the outgrowths of the last revolution in 1902.

The rapid progress made in the development of communication in Colombia recently, facilitated by wireless telegraphy, railroads, and telegraph mail service between the Caribbean ports and Bogota, and through these means extending to the most intimate contact with the outside world, her sectional viewpoint and ideas with regard to education, time, old customs, prejudices and sports is undergoing a gradual change. This is especially noticeable with regard to the latter.

Hereinafter, the only amusement universally indulged in was bullfighting. To a less extent, horse-racing was popular and interest in these is gradually losing to an augmenting interest in boxing, baseball, basketball, tennis, golf, football and track athletics. Teams for baseball and basketball are formed in most of the principal cities. The devotees of any of these games are so numerous that any meeting of their adherents is worthy of notification in the newspapers.

Madelin, in the Department of Antioquia, is the second largest city in the Mountains. Transport, Madelin, as well as communication, from the coast on the Caribbean is less difficult than from Bogota. As a consequence Medelin has preserved its isolation to a lesser degree.

Madelin is in the centre of the diocese of Medelin and has an active gold mining area and is one of the most important cities in Colombia. It is in the region of the Rio Madelin and the Rio Sinú.

Madelin, from its isolated position as a city and in its position in the central part of the Province of Antioquia, is the gateway to the rich gold region of the Madelin and Sinú valleys. It is the market for the gold of the Madelin and Sinú regions.

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Between the time the Tropical Oil Company of Pittsburgh began the work of development in the field at the time the present company began operations in 1920, the original company had completed three wells at Las Infantas, about thirty-eight kilometres from the Magdalena River at Barranca Bermeja. Results of the exploration campaign for the extraction of the field, beginning operations at about this time, were rendered very difficult by reason of the tropical jungle and bush which covers the country and which does not lend itself easily to the construction of roads or a railroad. In addition, the heavy and almost incessant rains make it necessary to work in constant battle in as far as construction and maintenance is concerned.

The administrative offices are located in Barranca Bermeja, which is situated on the east side of the Magdalena River, about four hundred miles from the mouth of the river at Barranquilla. Within the last three years there have been built at Barranca Bermeja, a refinery and cane plant, receiving warehouses, a modern power plant and machine shop, a complete town. The power plant supplies power for operation of the machine shop, camp lighting plant, etc., and is used for the neighboring village of Barranca Bermeja. The machine shop is entirely modern, equipped with the best tools, and for the repair of equipment, transport, etc.

Inasmuch as the production to date has been secured from the area located roughly thirty-five kilometres to the east of Barranca Bermeja, it was early found necessary to construct a railroad from this area to the field. Survey work has recently completed and construction of a meter gauge railroad has begun. The ever-present rains, flies, etc., to which the builder of a railroad through the jungle will be exposed, and the natural condition of the land found not insurmountable, as evidenced by the fact that it is now under contract for development, but will not have been laid as far as Camp 13, the terminus at the nearest end of the structure. This will facilitate transportation and development of the field.

The original method of transport from Barranca Bermeja to the field was by mules of ten-ton caterpillars. This was slow and arduous but was necessitated by the condition of the road at the time. A large fleet of two-ton trucks and trailers soon superseded the caterpillars on the roads where they were used, and the caterpillars have greatly helped in solving transportation difficulties.

Camps have been constructed at Barranca Bermeja, along the road to Las Infantas, at Las Infantas, and a complete town called locally Camp 17, being situated about thirtyeight miles from Barranca Bermeja. All camps are connected with telephone, and are supplied daily with necessary provisions, and equipment, including the inter-organization of the camps requiring ice, commissaries, materials, etc., has been made the matter of mobile transportation a highly important one. Storage tanks have been erected in the field and at Barranca Bermeja. The refinery has been supplying refining products sufficient to meet the requirements of Colombia since June, 1922. This, of course, an indication of the fact that the Colombians had heretofore been obliged to import oil products at exceedingly high rates.

An up-to-date refrigerating plant serves the increasing requirements of all camps with cold storage and ice, and a well equipped hospital, supplying all provisions required. Land suitable for pasture is well stocked with cattle, and other land has been cleared and cultivated, producing yuca, corn, plantains and other local staples. These are farming methods necessary to secure sufficient provisions to adequately meet the needs of the camps.

The company's complement of foreign employees is made up for the most part of skilled employees from Canada and Europe. The health, enthusiasm and morale of all employees is in excellent condition. Comfort and efficiency is considered by the management of prime importance.

The situation is alleviated in all manners open to the company. Camps, which have been made sanitary and free from malaria infection, have produced a remarkable degree of health. The base hospital has recently been completed which is one of the most modern and best equipped in Colombia.

Clubs have been built and are fitted with libraries, the contents of which are continuously augmented. Pool and billiard tables and tournaments of great skill are in evidence. Private and bowling alleys have been purchased and will soon be in use. A cotemporary swimming tank has been constructed and is in daily use. Although Colombia is far from the sea and the river, Barranca Bermeja is located on the bank of the Magdalena River, swimming in the river is im-

Financial Rise and Fall of the Average Man

By DEVENY'S Economic Table, compiled by the National Bureau of Economic Research from reports on 20,000 individuals received through bankers and life insurance men, show that the average man reaches the peak of his earning power at 45. That is, there are more men who have some new assets at that age than at any other. However, if a man has accumulated at least $2,000 by that time the chances are he will be worth more than that.

The less a man has at forty-five, the more rapid will be his decline, speaking of the average man, who has accumulated more than $10,000 by the time he is 55 is more than likely to retain his wealth.

People lose money at all ages. In proportion to the number who have money, probably as many young men lose as old. But the difference is that there is likely to be "come back" but the older man is not.

Comfortable homes provided with water and electric lights have been erected for Canadian workers and their families. For those homes a nominal charge is made to cover maintenance.

Although it is yet too early to estimate the benefit the work of the company has been to Colombia, or to prophecy for the future, it must be noted that the work to date has already been an important factor in the progress of the country.

Colombia is now entirely independent of other countries for oil and its products can be produced by a few given way to the use of many, and the automobiles and trucks are usurping the world of men and ox-carts. The river steamers have been able to change their fuel from wood to oil. And further, as production is increased the Government of Colombia will benefit directly from accruing royalties.
Cartagena de Indias

[By Anne Newman Sutton]

The mystery of its tortuous ways, it would be well to climb La Popa, the natural observatory. It takes twenty minutes if one has a good stride and does not loiter. The informing view from the summit makes the effort worth while and, from the standpoint of beauty, is comparable with that of San Francisco and the Golden Gate seen from the Berkeley campanile or Thousand Oakes. It is a grand and impressive first.

From below can be heard the City’s pulse, a slow rhythm of mingled sounds: the throbbing of Depeo plants, and the rustling of corn unnecessarily loud, a train or boat whistle, community singing and a discordant hand in hilarious festa, children’s voices with a certain element in play, a hurdy’s brayings, and perhaps the soft strumming of a tiple with a serenade sung in innumerable times by the black breyer. On the whole, it is a rather pleasant expression of careless industry and of thorough enjoyment.

The whole Bay region lies before one like an open map. Cartagena proper and the green fan-shaped mass called Manga are plainly seen to be islands; and if that slender spit of palm-fringed land, Callejo, pointing northeast like an index finger and extending to Boca Grande in the opposite direction could be used to fill up some of the waterways nearer the center of town, it would be seen that the three districts together do not exceed, in all probability, a square mile in area.

Upon closer observation it becomes an old town, incognizant certainly to a Northern eye; for sprinkled among white buildings with handsomely carved columns and verdigris made home-like by hibiscus and acacia bloom, are tiny huts indicative of the most wretched poverty and ignorance, while here and there domos and towers of red brick (which are seldom seen) stand against the prostitutions of the Christ. In the Bay numerous white sail boats, like fluttered birds, have come to harbor; and picturesque little canoes oared by natives in the glistering costume of the nude, glide along toward the market. The harbor, among whose virtues are ample space and admirable protection, looks placid as a mill-pond. Remembering her coastal position, her former wealth, and her industrial possibilities in the Caribbean, one does not marvel that Cartagena was, during three hundred years, a bone of contention among foreign invaders, nor that here was staged a great drama, pathetic and tragic, yet colored with glory. It is worth while to recall that past which won for Cartagena those royal and noble appellation ‘Queen of the Indies’ and ‘The City Renascence.’ Here one descends from the sublime heights of Popa to examine the picturesque facts of make history.

Discovery dates back over four hundred years. (1501 or 1562). In 1523 with the erection of a few bamboo huts with thatched roofs, and the construction of a wooden stockade, the City was founded. In 1538 two stone structures, a cathedral and a hospital for the poor, were introduced. Old buildings such as the Santo Domingo and San Francisco churches, the Hospital and Chapel of San Juan de Dios, the convent of Santa Teresa, Santa Cruz de la Popa, San Diego, San Augustin, Santa Clara and la Merced, and the ‘Holy’ Inquisition, came in due time. A wall that still stands was built for protection to replace the old stockade and before 1800 at least a dozen forts had been built. Among these was San Fernando and San Jose at the entrance of Boca Chica, San Felipe whose construction covered a period of twenty-seven years and cost eleven millions, and La Popa on the mountain top are probably most important. In 1882 a lighthouse was built.

To give a detailed account of foreign aggression and the resultant battles would take volumes. Let a cursory summary suffice: The French, during several centuries, carrying European troubles into the New World, struggled and quarreled with Spain and the Cartageneros for loot and possession; the English did likewise; and finally Spain, a devout power too feeble, impoverished, and demoralized to hold her own in war and politics, quarreled with the Cartageneros, her offspring, who declared Independence in 1811 and won a decisive victory in 1824.

In the meantime, the value of hundreds of thousands of gold ducats had been wrested from Spain’s coffers in Cartagena and swept beyond the seas to foreign monarchs, for the town had suffered four sackings and had lost constantly to private buccaneering ships sailing the Spanish Main. Dejeanties, Baron of Pontius, captured the most loot at one time, it seems, but Sir Francis Drake, in 1586, won for the British Government the value of 11,000 ducats and additional booty.

With these facts in mind, together with the attendant slave trade, the heavy taxation, and the mixing of bloods, it is not strange that of the 69,000 inhabitants of Cartagena, only five or ten per cent are pure white, while the rest are Negro, Indian, Negro-Indian, Negro-Spanish, Indian-Spanish, or an alloy of the three. Nor is it strange that there is a heavy percentage of illiterates assigned to a future of servitude, content with a dirt-floor hovel, the meagreest of clothes, and the humblest fare.

But the future looks hopeful. Already in Cartagena there are two colleges for men, one for women, and a kindergarten for children under other direction than that of religious orders. There is an earnest movement, too, to decrease the ranks of the illiterate. Employment in such industries as the manufacture of flour, sugar, rum, tobacco, cotton, shoes, leather, and soap is helping some to emerge from the dark. The opening of the Dique canal soon to take place, will increase industry presently and cause the employment of more men which in turn should raise the average economic structure now so low among the less fortunate. The income from exports last year reached a figure considerably over seventeen millions, while in 1911 it was less than six. Industrial development, though limited in the main to native consumption, promised much.

The City has at least three daily newspapers, five good banks with branches or correspondents in the United States, two ice houses, three modern telephone with fairly good service, and an electric light plant, which though ridiculously inefficient now, is to be replaced by a new one that will give the desired service. There are good facilities for shipping due to seaport accommodations offered by three New York companies, one of New Orleans, and seven European lines. Cartagena has slept long in the glory that decked her but the lassitude is over. The Cartageneros, with the aid of foreign brains and capital, will arrive.

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Lioness in Cartagena, provided with ample shade...

The Queen of the Indies

[Image: Left: Agustinas view of San Felipe Fort, built by Spaniards on hill outside city wall. This Fort connected by tunnel with city. Upper: La Popa Hill. Lower: Santa Cruz, a quiet colonial village. Church is most prominent. Right: Natives bringing produce to market.]
The "Lure of the Tropics" and the "Spell of the Arctic"

T. A. Link

Sleeping beneath a spruce tree near the edge of the Arctic Circle, during a crisp, cold night, wrapped in an eider-down, sunk deep in a bell of moss, watching the fantastic Northern Lights dance about the sky, is an experience worth while...

...Stretched out in a hammock, on a balmy night amid a grove of palm trees, watching the Southern Cross emerge and then dip beneath the horizon of that mysterious and ever restless Caribbean Sea, is something to register in the panels of your memory as a sensation of enduring impressiveness...

These two extremely contrasting pictures of the Arctic regions on one hand, and the tropical climate on the other—have been realized by very few, though experienced by many. The realization of the one usually occurs while the other is being experienced. Thus, these settings are rather appreciated at the time one is immersed in their environment. Mother Nature strives to please us. Her immediate effort is vain.

So she files a silhouette in our subconscious mind which the alchemy of time and change develops to a perfect picture. It is the extremes that appeal to a young mind. Romance is never supposed to be found in routine affairs.

Waves and tides are expeditions for Imperial Oil, Limited, for the lands fringing the Arctic Circle along the banks of the mighty Mackenzie River, no thoughts but of one continuous round of romance, with thrills galore, could enter the mind of the members of the expedition.

On any United Fruit Co. steamer leaving New York one is greeted by young men, and sometimes young women, on their way to Peru or Colombia, the storied lands of the tropics. They also, see nothing but "peaches and cream" instead of them. Just think of it, to see alligators, flying fish, monkeys, parrots, snakes as large as trees, palm trees, bull fights, and what not! It certainly promises to be a wonderful experience.

It really would be interesting to compare the task handled out a little while ago "sodding in" on the banks of an Arctic stream in a forty foot layer of frost, with the conversation of two husky Mid-Continental and California flirers who are trying to sink a hole in the jungles some distance from the Rio Magdalena, where the parrots and monkeys make enough noise to drown the conversation. A most remarkable similarity would be in evidence if it happened to be by young men working in foreign fields outside the temperate zone for the first time.

An Arctic geologist has much in common with one working in the tropics. He must eat considerable canned goods in both places, collect fossils, sleep in tents, wash in streams, keep his mouth shut, act wise and mysterious, never cuss, and listen to the talk of weary assistants who want to be chiseled at the end of the season. In the north the geologist sweats, for he must carry or drag along all his own supplies; in the tropics he sweats watching the natives do an expedition for Imperial Oil, Limited, left for the lands fringing the Arctic Circle along the banks of the mighty Mackenzie River, no thoughts but of one continuous round of romance, with thrills galore, could enter the mind of the members of the expedition.

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On the summit of Bear Mountain overlooking Mackenzie Riv
rivers are ice-cold and full of cramps. Where would one rather have one’s canoe upset? In the middle of an ice-cold river with a chill in its flood or in a warm, tropical river where alligators await a well-fed caucasian.

When asking a tomatop when the freight will be moved over the Smith portage on the Slave River, he will assure you “tomorrow.” A similar question asked in the tropics is answered by “manana.” It is just as easy to get seasick on the blue Caribbean Sea in a dug-out sailing boat, as on Great Slave Lake in a launch. The Indians in the north are equally as lazy as their brothers in the tropics. Square-men exhaust about the same amount of time explaining why they are and what they are as do their equivalents in the jungles of Colombia. Camp gossip and the resulting fiction is as common in a northern frontier colony as amongst the gringories in the South America republics.

The Efficient Credit Man

The Efficient Credit Man pays dividends to his Company’s Competitors. This does not sound just right but it is right exactly as printed and furthermore, it is the truth.

Of all the desks in an office where efficiency is required it is the desk occupied by the Credit Man. His is the duty to do some almost instantaneous investigating, some quick placing together of facts, and in any case his judgment means either a loss or a gain to his Company. He is not in the same position as other office employees, who might make an error in posting and who are in a position to correct the erroneous entry without any real harm to anyone.

When the Credit Man places his approval on an order for a bill of goods the sale is cast; the goods are shipped. If a mistake is made and it develops that the product has been delivered to someone not worthy of credit the Credit Man is in for a match of wits and his ability to collect depends upon the efficiency of his method of attack.

Some men are born collectors, others acquire the knowledge through exhaustive study and application, and others never arrive. The latter, happily for the Company at least, do not last long.

Let us not take too lightly the duties of the efficient Credit Man. Give him all the data you can affecting present or prospective customers. He stands between the demand of the great wide world and the amount written off to Profit and Loss Bad Account. He also is working for the Company and he would like to pass every order presented to him. His hardest job is to say “no,” particularly when the order is large. But if he does not say “no” because his decision is based on facts.

We started on the inefficient Credit Man but happily we are not acquainted with him; his name does not appear on our pay roll.

The Ontario Birthplace

The Staff of the Imperial Oil, Limited, London, Ontario, is interesting because it once was the centre of the Petroleum Refining Industry in Canada and the birthplace of Imperial Oil, Limited.

In 1862 William Spencer, the pioneer Canadian refiner had started a refinery at Woodstock, but later moved to London and greatly enlarged and improved his refineries. Many other refiners were built until there were about a dozen operating in London, and a host of small refineries operating in other places. A downward trend in business followed and a company called the London Oil Refinery Company was formed and took over something like twenty-seven oil companies.

The development of refining was naturally followed by an increase in production until a

Know the Facts

It takes a long time to write a description of something you don’t know. It takes a good many words to picture in another’s mind something which you see only vaguely in your own.

Your brain cannot puzzle out intricacies, and at the same time make choice of words and way of placing these ideas before another mind clearly, compellingly. Men soon detect the sham who explains things he doesn’t comprehend.

To study out a problem is a man’s task. To make someone else understand it is a greater one. Don’t attempt both at once.

Wrap your mind about the thing you have to sell—analyze it—study it—finger it all over with the tentacles of the brain.
Steamboating on the Magdalena

LONG before the silence of the great western rivers in North America was intruded by the paddle beat of steamboats, the Magdalena River, pouring from the heart and across the bosom of Colombia into the Caribbean Sea, was plied by the steam propelled craft of the enterprising Don Juan Bernardo Elbers. That was in 1824.

It is therefore of interest to note that the year 1824 marks 100 years of steam navigation on the river and that today the Tropical Oil fleet represents the most advanced type of steamers operating on the Magdalena.

Activities on this river date back beyond 100 years, however. It was probably the first great river discovered on the American continent. The exact date has not been fixed by historians, but Rodrigo de Bastidas, one of the first navigators of the New World, is credited with the finding of the Río Grande de la Magdalena, and it is known that the river was so named because it was sighted on the feast day of this Saint in 1500.

It is chronicled that Bastidas sailed from Cadiz in October 1500 to discover new lands, and arrived in 1501 at the mouth of the Magdalena river, called the "Ilocas de Ceniza" by reason of the color of the water. He explored the coastal regions but did not ascend the river.

Santa Marta, a point slightly to the east of the Magdalena delta, was founded in 1525. A new expedition was organised in 1534 with 116 soldiers and various officials. In December of 1535 the expedition of Adelantado Pedro Fernández de Lugo landed at Santa Marta with Chief Justice Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada. An expedition in 1536 explored the Magdalena, but in attempting to enter the mouth of the river, two vessels with all on board perished, due to bad weather. The expedition was re-organized, suffered much from malaria and hunger, and ultimately arrived at La Torca, which is today known as Barranquilla-Bejma, the banks of the river being a bright reddish color. This is the site of the present International Petroleums refinery.

The inhabitants fled at the approach of the Spaniards. The village comprised 20 huts in which the Spaniards discovered food and clothing. Quesada's expedition returned to the coast in 1539 much to the surprise of the towns of Cartagena and Santa Marta who believed they had perished.

In 1540 Gerónimo Lobo headed an expedition, and fearing to navigate the mouth of the Magdalena, embarked from the Cienega near Santa Marta, reaching the river by its former mouth.

And so on, up to the year 1824 when Don Juan Bernardo Elbers, a German, initiated steamboat navigation on the Magdalena River. The first steamboat ploughed the Magdalena River 288 years after Quesada's expedition in 1536. In 1825 another steamer, the "General San Lander," navigated as far as Conojo, and later another steamer, the "Gran Bolivar" was navigated in the lower river. Inasmuch as the bulk of internal communication and transport is borne by river steamers and to a lesser extent by railroads, it may not be amiss to detail some of the many difficulties which must be overcome.

Until recent years travel from the Caribbean Sea up the Magdalena River to Bogota was fraught with much delay and annoyance, and could be classed quite properly as a hardship. Where it is no possible to journey via railroad over mountain pass and jungle trail, that part of the trip between the river and Bogota was in former times made by male and coach. On the river, there were far less steamers to make the journey upriver, all of them less commodiously equipped for the voyage. Wood was then the only fuel available. Often in the dry season when the level of the river was gradually lowered, boats were caught on sand bars and have been known to remain stranded from the spot for weeks at a time. It was not unusual for the journey to occupy months of time.

These days, however, there is a large number of well-equipped, electrically lighted and ventilated boats, all of shallow draught, which make the trip from Barranquilla to La Dorado, and from Beltran to Girardot in little more than a week's time. The railroads connecting Puerto Berrio with Medellin, La Dorado with Beltran, and Girardot with the capital, Bogota; as well as the one between Cartagena and Calamar on the Magdalena River, now permit the journey between the sea and Bogota to be consummated with a minimum of hardship and delay.

Rapid mail service between the cities is afforded by a daily mail and passenger service which starts at Cartagena and Barranquilla and thence on up the Magdalena River to Girardot. Train service relay the mail from Puerto Berrio, one of the air service stations, to Medellin, and another by connecting Girardot with Puerta de Tierra, the southern terminus of the air route, to Bogota. Thus the principal cities are served bi-weekly and the transit time is cut down between Cartagena and Bogota from a former average of about ten days to two days.

Telegraphic service is available between all principal cities and villages and there are nine wireless stations serving the Republic.

Coincident with the start of operations by Tropical Oil at Las Infantas, the absolute necessity of adequate transportation facilities was recognized and plans for a river fleet were at once drawn up.

The Marine Department now has in operation two large and two small shallow draught river steamers, and a fleet of thirteen barges. These are utilized for transportation of material from Calamar to Barranquilla, and for distribution of fuel oil to the fuel oil stations which have been built along the river at various places for the fueling of other river steamers, the owners of which have been quick to recognize the advantage of oil as a fuel instead of wood which had been used previously. There are six of these tank stations located at advantageous points between Barranquilla and La Dorado. These towboats are used also for distribution of the refinery products to various river stations when they are relayed to stations within the interior. The powered units of this fleet are represented by four stern-wheel paddle boats of the Mississippi River type, flat bottomed and drawing between three and five feet of water. The "Carare" and "Guayabito" are the largest, each being 190 feet in length and 28 feet in breadth. The "El Tigre," originally designed and built to 92 feet length, has been put on the ways at Barranquilla, cut in half, and 36 feet added to the length. This remarkable feat, the reason for which is because of the conditions under which it is being accomplished, has been carried out by our own organization entirely.

"The Opón" is the smallest boat, 92 feet long, and it is used mostly for services on the

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WOOD FOR FUEL

A fuel station on the Magdalena where wood-burning steamers can refuel. Tropical Oil's own fleet is relied upon for this service. Tropical Oil's are the largest and most modern of the fleet.
A conclusive method of "Shanghauling" a reluctant boater.

A river above Barranca-Bermesa, up to Puerto Berrio and La Dorado which marks the end of navigation for our vessels. This section of the Magdalena is more narrow, has less depth and has proven uneconomical for the larger towboats. The power, draught and scope of operation of the "Open" is, of course, not as great as the other towboats, but it is the best suited to the service requirements above Barranca-Bermesa.

There are also nine launches and a few houseboats. The barges and equipment comprises two 80-foot barges; six 100-footers; and five 125-footers. The towboats and barges were with one exception assembled at Barranquilla where the Maritime Department had installed a shipyard for this purpose. The exception referred to was the 125-foot barges which were built at Middlesex, England, and towed from there to Cartagena by two Dutch tugs. The tugs left England on April 22, 1924, one with two barges and the other with three, and arrived at Cartagena on June 1st, 40 days later. The voyage was one of the most successful of its kind. Though compelled to put into port on the Bay of biscay because of heavy weather, and into the Azores for fuel, the entire voyage of 4200 miles was accomplished with damage not exceeding $100.

The importance of the towns located on the banks of the Magdalena cannot be over-emphasized, outlets as they are for the produce of the interior. Closest to the mouth of the river is Barranquilla. Properly speaking, it is not situated on the river but on an old waterway which has been dredged out. This channel is approximately 3 miles long. The only ship registry yard and fuel facilities for the entire river are at Barranquilla. A railway, seventeen miles in length, connects the town with the ocean port of Puerto Colombia.

Calamar, the next port of any importance from Barranquilla, is 166 Kilometres above Barranquilla. The average rise and fall of the river at this point approximates 12 feet, and the current runs between 4 and 6 miles an hour. Calamar is connected with Cartagena by the Cartagena-Calamar Ry., as well as the "dique," an old outlet of the Magdalena that is navigable 6 months out of the year to a draught of four feet. The banks of the river here are comparatively high, much higher than at any point either above or below, and the district has been inundated only once in 60 years.

Magangué is above Calamar again. The town is built on a long, low, level bank of the river and every town the river itself is from one to three feet under water. For a distance of 20 miles below and 150 miles above, there is not much of river bank that is not flooded every year with the exception of the little knoll on which is located the Yai station, 2 miles south of Magangué, and Un Banco about 37 miles above. Magangué is the supply point for the entire San Jorge and Cauca Rivers, as well as the port of entry for all merchandise into the savannahs or plain regions to the west of the river.

Puerto Wilches is a small town 650 kilometres above Barranquilla and every year it goes under water. For a number of years it has been the terminal for a railroad to San Jacinto and Curramanga. From Puerto Wilches up to Puerto Berrio the river is very shallow and the most difficult to navigate. During low water the steamers are held up at this point anywhere from one to four and five days without moving. According to government regulation, any vessel can tie up at any place along the entire river in a case of this nature, whether it be private or government owned property, a strip of land 20 metres wide along all navigable rivers, bays or water fronts of any character being maintained for public use.

Puerto Berrio is one of the best ports on the Magdalena River. It has a good water-front and is built on high land, 811 Kilometres above Barranquilla. The government railroad which runs from this port to Medellin is well managed and is one of the best in the country. Big movements of coffee come out through Medellin to this port.

La Dorado is 987 kilometres above Barranquilla. The river runs over a shoal of 31/4 hours. We then proceeded and at 11:30 a.m. when near Chivo, a heavy knock on smashed in our pilot wheel, all the spokes came out. The steering gear, however, remained intact and we kept steaming. At 1:30 p.m. we encountered the bad channel of La Sinosa where barges C-5-6-7-8 ran aground. At a shoal of stretch of river, especially during the dry season. It is the terminal of the railway

HOTEL SCARLON AT PUERTO BERRIO

which connects the upper and lower reaches of the Magdalena and carries freight and passenger service to the interior of the Republic.

Due to the wide variation in yearly rainfall there is an average rise and fall anywhere from 8 to 18 feet along the river, and this is never the same any two years. The current can be stated as ranging between an average between 5% and 5 miles per hour.

Appreciation of the difficulties of navigation on the Magdalena could be gained most comprehensively by reading a captain's log book. More frequently than not, a voyage is one long round trip of difficulty with river conditions. The close relation between a river Captain's and a driller's log is striking. Talk about the tribulations of a driller! Here is a random log excerpt from one trip made by the "Granadillo" between Barrana-Bermesa, Barranquilla and return.

"Dec. 25. We took five barges in tow, loaded to 7500 barrels of fuel oil, and sailed at 5:30 a.m. reaching Rionegro at 8 a.m. Here barge No. 6 stuck on a shoal and the rearrangement was in progress. After refloating this barge caused a loss of 21/2 hours. We then proceeded and at 11:30 a.m. near Chivo, a heavy knock on smashed in our pilot wheel, all the spokes came out. The steering gear, however, remained intact and we kept steaming. At 1:30 p.m. we encountered the bad channel of La Sinosa where barges C-5-6-7-8 ran aground. At a shoal of stretch of river, especially during the dry season. It is the terminal of the railway.

The "barca" may be seen on the extreme left of the boat. One enters the canal by means of a stair. It is supplied with water from a barrel on the floor over head.

On the right, the "El Tacho" being launched at Barranca-Bermesa after long journey through the use of fuel oil in place of wood.

The Company has likewise been of great benefit to the development of the air mail and passenger service of Colombia in affording an assured supply of aeroplane gasoline refined from Colombian crude. This gasoline is a potential factor in the development of much needed radio communication in the country, and the elimination of the necessity to import aeroplane gasoline should prove an impetus to the expansion of aerial service.

IMPERIAL OIL QUOTATION

At the hour of going to press, December 12th, Imperial Oil Shares on the Exchange stood 1091/4 per share.
Transplanting A National Pastime

Baseball, found to be the one real sport that interests everyone, has been enthroned king of recreation at Barranca-Bermeja and Las Infas. Here a round-the-season schedule operates to give great advantage over the restrictions of the four- seasonal months, with the teams representing both camps. The line-up of the infants team is picked from the rig-builders' drillers and of that of the Barranca players represent the best in office, refinery and shops. Some of the participants are one-time "pros."

A game is staged at either place every two weeks. It opens at eight o'clock on a Sunday morning before the solar sun can get a chance to burn the pop out of the players. For this reason also a game is limited to seven innings instead of the customary nine.

Baseball receives the support of the ladies, who are always present in the new grandstand, while the roosters for both teams turn out on force with the same northerly pep and ability to tug the umpire.

And yet, the sport has an established popularity not only in Colombia, but in Peru as well, about which more next month.

Tropical Trees

Preacher in words that receive growth attained by present native vegetation of Colombia is enshrined by the national reports.

To the rock hounds of an oil organization goes the credit for discovery of oil, interesting (and sometimes violent) phases of nature, but it is thought that the last word in strange tropical growth was received at this office a short time ago. It came all the way from our holdings in Colombia.

"Have you heard about the new tree that one of your geologists is endeavoring to cultivate in Colombia?" our informant inquired. "Shoe Trees," he called them.

"Shoe Trees?" we ejaculated in astonishment. "Yes," he nodded those two words without any mistake about them. I saw that geologist take the trees from his own trunk while unloading at the hacienda of another geologist, and he handled them with frugal good care.

"That's just it," he said, "they weren't. From the size of them they must have been full grown.

With that he escaped, but the story remains. What next from our tropical geologists? Perhaps it will be for one of them to seed bird seed in Colombia's fertile soil and in expectation of growing birds there. No one is gripped to sprout from his crop nothing better than egg plants.
THE CLEARING HOUSE

Hearty Wishes to Everybody for a Merry Christmas and a Right Prosperous New Year