

FEW IN THE PLOT

Panama City Spoke for the Country.

JUNTA NAMED BY COUNCIL

Isthmians Have Odd Ideas of Patriotism.

LOOK FOR A STREAM OF GOLD

Remember Extravagances of French Administration and Believe That Old Times Will Be Repeated.

LETTER NO. 6.
By Merrill A. Pease.
(Staff Correspondence of The Oregonian.)

PANAMA, R. P., Dec. 15.—It is not necessary to go far afield when seeking justification of the judgment that the Republic of Panama stands as a contradiction among nations. The American colonies revolted against England and set up their independence under the provocation of lesser grievances than Panama for years has been charging up against Colombia; yet Panama never found cause for rebellion and secession in Colombian oppression.

That the new republic was born without the incentive of patriotism and with no higher purpose in view than the purely commercial one of securing the construction of a ship canal across the narrow isthmian strip, has already been shown in this correspondence. Lack of resentment toward Colombia because of her oppressive administration, lack of patriotism and lack of a national purpose, political in character, constitute three striking contradictions that rest at the very foundation of this new republic's existence, and that serve to isolate it from other nations that have won their independence.

The entire absence of anything resembling self-reliance, and the implicit confidence shown in the United States, upon which the whole republican structure leans absolutely for support and maintenance, is a fourth in the list of strange contradictions discoverable here. There are others equally striking that may be traced without, in the smallest way, compromising the fact of the republic's existence—an existence as actual as it is welcome to the people of the isthmus. These contradictions form a vital chapter in any story which purports to cover the situation in Panama in its various phases, and they must be considered.

Something of a Paradox.
In order to get at and present them properly it may be well to start with the general proposition, anomalous though it may seem, for the republic is a fact, that, judging by accepted standards, the Republic of Panama is nonexistent. The territory known to the Colombian Federation as the Department of Panama, and now embraced by the republic, is a long, narrow strip of land extending in a generally easterly and westerly direction. It is about 475 miles long, measured in a straight line, and varies in width from about 47 miles, between Colon and Panama, to something more than 100 miles at its eastern extremity and along the 181 parallel of longitude.

On the west it is bounded by Costa Rica, with which nation there is a long-standing boundary dispute, while on the east the Gulf of Darien and the Atrato River mark its separation from the South American mainland and the great body of the Colombian Republic. The coast line, considerable more than 1000 miles in length, is rough and broken. The surface of the country is generally mountainous, although immense swamps and stretches of treeless uplands are frequent.

Except along the coast, the country is almost entirely uninhabited, all of the towns and cities of any consequence being located near the sea or very near to it. In the interior are bands of Indians, two or three of the more important tribes of which have rarely been communicated with. Vast areas in the extreme eastern and western portions of the country remain wholly unexplored, and the knowledge of what the interior holds is most limited. In this territory there are supposed to live, including Indians, about 200,000 persons. No attempt has ever been made to take a census of the population, so the figure named can only be taken as a more or less accurate estimate.

People Had No Voice in It.

This territory, while it stood in the Colombian Federation as the Department of Panama, and, therefore, at the time of the secession, was divided into seven provinces, viz: Chiriqui, Los Santos, Veraguas, Panama, Colon, Bocas del Toro and Coclé. Each of these provinces was governed by a Governor, subordinate to the Department Governor. Each had its Council, and each was entitled to representation by Senators and Representatives in the two branches of the Colombian Congress, which sat at Bogota.

It will be seen from this explanation that no matter how corrupt, inefficient and oppressive the old order of things may have been, the fabric of the state was complete in all of its details, the governmental structure having been carried down as perfectly in theory as it is in our own Union. It follows from this, as a natural presumption, that in the secessionist movement all of these provinces should have had a voice. It happens, however, that, natural as that presumption may be, it is wholly groundless in this instance.

The natural corollary of the last statement is that the republic as it stands does not represent the people of Panama—speaking now of the entire department—and such is actually the case. It may represent them in the sense that the sentiment of all the people concurs in what has been done; but it is an indisputable fact that outside of the city of Panama, the people of the new republic had no voice whatever in the establishment of the republic.

Were Not in the Secret.

In previous letters I have sketched the story of the secessionist movement. It

began with three men, and was executed under the supervision of those three and four others, the working under the advice and counsel of four Americans. Before the coup d'état others were, perforce, taken into the secret; but so closely were the plans guarded that those who were really in the secret and knew definitely the details might be counted on the fingers of the two hands.

This brings us to the revolution itself, and introduces the stranger of all the contradictions discoverable in connection with the birth of this national infant. The uprising took place on the 24 day of November, being initiated by the arrest of Generals Tovar and Amaya and Governor Obaldia, which occurrences took place in the City of Panama.

That city, of course, knew what had occurred the moment the arrests were effected; but Colon was kept in ignorance of the secession until the following day. It was on the 4th of the month that the public meeting was held in the Cathedral plaza, Panama, the independence of the republic proclaimed, and the declaration of independence—or manifestation, as they call it here—was signed.

Bearing in mind the fact that seven men, aided by the soldiers and others whose support for the movement had been purchased with dollars, were alone responsible for the sudden revolution in the political status of Panama, one may wonder away down a stretch of not uninteresting inquiries. Were the people of the other provinces consulted as to what it was proposed by the secessionists to do? They were not. Were the people, speaking in general terms, of the provinces of Colon and Amaya let into the secret? They were not.

They knew, by general rumor, that a revolution was on the tap, but they had not been consulted nor their advice asked as to the wisdom or unwisdom of what was contemplated. Was a provisional Congress, composed of delegates from the several provinces, held for the purpose of debating the project and framing a bill of separation? Nothing of the kind was ever thought of. How, then, was the affair carried through? In this simple and unique manner:

Done by a Municipal Council.

The little band of secessionists let the members of the City Council of Panama into their secret late in October, when it became evident that a blow would have to be struck very soon or forever withheld. These City Councilmen—11 in number—were willing to further the project, so that when the public meeting was held in the Cathedral Plaza, Panama, on November 4, they were all in attendance.

They, too, were the first to sign the declaration of independence, and immediately after that formality they adjourned across the street to the Municipal building, and went into session behind closed doors. Their first act then was to pass the declaration, which had already been engrossed in a book of record, and append their names to the engrossed copy. This done, the City Council appointed the three members of the provisional governing junta authorizing them to take charge of the affairs of the new republic.

The junta assembled at once and named the members of the provisional cabinet, and the new republic became a fact. On the same day Porfirio Mollineda had taken charge of affairs at Colon as provisional Governor appointed by the junta, but outside of the City of Panama and Colon, and along the line of the Panama Railroad, the people of the new republic were in entire ignorance of the fact that they were no longer subjects of Colombia.

Not a Word to Say.

It seems almost incredible that the Municipal Council of a city of fewer than 25,000 people should take upon themselves the right to create a republic out of a territory equal in area to the State of Indiana; but that was what was actually done in this case. Instead of a provincial Congress, the City Council of Panama passed the act of independence. Every legislative formality incident to the creation of this republic was performed by these City Councilmen, no portion of the new republic, except the City of Panama, having a voice, by representation, in what was done.

Nor has any other portion of the new republic had such a vote to this day. No Congress has been called to ratify the secession, nor has any one of the seven provinces been requested to assemble, in council or by mass meeting, to pass an act of ratification. There might be a parallel for this procedure in the Municipal Council of one of our own cities—Indianapolis, for instance, since the area of Indiana is about the same as that of Panama—should pass an ordinance declaring the State of Indiana a free and independent nation; but the average American imagination is impotent to summon such a spectacle as that into being.

But it was that very thing which was done here, when the Municipal Council of Panama legislated for the 200,000 inhabitants of this territory in severing all their obligations of fealty to Colombia, making them free and independent; and doing these things without consulting any of the 200,000 inhabitants save an insignificant minority, restricted in number practically to the original band of secessionists.

How It Was Proclaimed.

It is not intended by the foregoing to impeach or compromise the existence of the new republic. Such an attempt would be fatuous, for the new republic is actual. The purpose is merely to show the incongruity of the procedure, although no Panama can be brought to see that there is anything national incongruous or contradictory in the fact that a republic has been created by an ordinance passed by a City Council.

This inability of the Panamanians to realize what impresses Americans as little short of ludicrous is doubtless due to the fact that measures have been taken, though not by legislative steps, to bring the whole territory to accept the new form of government. Immediately after the creation of the republic and the appointment of the junta by the City Council of Panama, the junta took steps to this end. Envoies were sent into the different provinces to proclaim the establishment of the republic. These envoies were effective orators—as are nearly all the people of these Southern countries. They toured along both coasts, east and west, stopping at the principal cities. Their coming was unannounced in these cities, which, until the arrival of the envoies, were without knowledge of the fact that Panama had seceded from Colombia. David, Chiriqui, Santiago and other cities and towns along and adjacent to the Pacific Coast; Bocas del Toro, Nombre de Dios, Porto Bello, etc., on the Caribbean shores, were visited in this way, and reports have been received from all of the envoies, although some of them have not yet returned to Panama.

In each of these cities the emissary

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would, upon his arrival, employ the local band of musicians. Taking a stand in the principal plaza, he would draw his crowd by the band's efforts, and when a number sufficient for his purpose had assembled, he would read the declaration of independence.

Following the reading would come his harangue, the burden of which was that the establishment of the republic meant the construction of the ship canal by the United States across the isthmus, and that the construction of this canal meant that the United States would pay to the republic a sum of money sufficient to make all of the people rich and prosperous. This was done in every instance, and the orator's argument, being addressed to a people among whom poverty in its most abject form prevailed, never failed to elicit enthusiastic responses in approval of what had been done.

The business of the emissary was then to report to the junta that the people of that town accepted the republic and gloried in its creation. This procedure has been followed in treating with all of the people of the isthmus. In a more formal manner, some of the provinces have communicated with the junta through their Governors. Support has been tendered in this way of men and arms to support the republic's independence, and while it is not pretended that anything like all of the people of the republic have been communicated with, the assurances, through the emissaries and the Governors, have been sufficient in number to carry the conviction that the people of Panama generally approve the severance of their relations with Colombia.

No Opposition Now Apparent.

If they lack patriotism for their own, they certainly have no love for Colombia and are glad to escape her dominion, their willingness extending to ready acceptance, after the event, of all that was done by the City Council of Panama, which enjoys the unique distinction of having by simple ordinance created a republic, so far as the formal structure of this republic is concerned. From this it will appear—and such is the indisputable fact—that the Republic of Panama exists today, in its governmental features, because it is unopposed.

The junta is governing without opposition, and while the allegiance of none of its people, except the soldiers and sailors, has been pledged to the new republic, the junta constitutes a governing body de jure because there is no dispute as to its authority.

Into the situation created under and by these contradictory conditions and methods there enter several elements of danger. The first and most important of these is delay in giving to the government the form of more certain acceptability to the people. The people are acquiescent now because their condition is new and novel; but how long they will remain so is problematical.

The conviction is universal among them that the United States will begin actual canal operations at once. Everybody is expecting money to flow freely within the next few days, because they have been encouraged to believe that the establishment of the republic means the immediate beginning of work on the canal. This is seen in divers ways. Hotels whose bars have been closed since the cessation of canal work by the French—14 years ago—are preparing to open them within a few weeks. Owners of renting property in Panama and Colon, who have accepted nominal rents from the natives and nondeportees are turning these people out of their premises in the expectation that within a few days there will be such an influx of Americans as to send rents booming.

"The Canal Is Coming."

Speculation of every sort is rife, based upon this belief, and upon every tongue is the slogan, "The canal is coming." To Panamanians, who saw and participated in the riot of French extravagance and corruption, the fact that "the canal is coming" means a new time, and Panama can hardly restrain itself until the moment of actual operations arrives.

From this condition there is certain to be a reaction. The United States will not begin canal operations for months, for if the advice of men like Admiral Walker, Colonel William Murray Black, the Army's military expert, and other Americans now here is accepted, months must elapse, even after the ratification of the treaty by the United States Senate, before sanitary conditions can be so improved as to permit the work of canal construction to begin. This means that a season of dire disappointment, inviting to dissatisfaction with the government is certain to prevail; and facing this prospect the government lacks proper recognition by the people.

All thought of creating a government by the formal adoption of a constitution and the election of administrative officials waits upon Dr. Manuel Amador's return from the States, but the wise heads here—a serious mistake is being made in this delaying. The demand that a constitutional convention, with representatives from all the provinces, be called is becoming insistent, the more farseeing among the Panamanians believing that it is essential that the republican government be given a more substantial foundation, and something upon which it can more certainly claim the adherence of the people than is possible through the mere fact that it exists now because it is without opposition.

Church and State.

Another disturbing factor, and one bound to arouse itself sooner or later, is the conflict over the relations between church and state. The policy of the Con-

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FOUR ARE ACCUSED

Twin Brother Charged With Miss Gillespie's Murder.

OTHER THREE ARE RELATIVES

Mrs. Belle Seward, a Sister and Alleged Enemy of Dead Woman, Myron Barbour, Cashier, and Wife, Indicted.

RISE SUN, Ind., Dec. 22.—(Special.)

Never in the criminal history of Indiana was there such a shocking tragedy as the assassination of Elizabeth Gillespie, which took place on the evening of December 8. Just 12 days later her twin brother, James Gillespie; Myron L. Barbour, Carrie Barbour, the latter's wife, and Mrs. Belle Seward, sister of the dead girl, were jointly indicted for the murder. The shot which killed Miss Gillespie was fired from a shotgun through a window in her own house just as dusk was falling. The murder was the most sensational in the history of the state, and no less sensational was the finding of the grand jury, which, after 12 days of research, returned indictments charging the relatives of the dead girl with the crime.

Miss Gillespie was shot just as she was preparing for dinner. She was standing before a mirror when a shot was fired from the yard below. A shotgun was the weapon used and the full contents of the load struck Miss Gillespie in the back. She lived until the next day. She never regained consciousness after the fatal shot was fired, and for a time it was feared that the crime would remain a mystery. At first it was thought that the robbery was at the bottom of the crime, but circumstances developed that pointed the finger of suspicion at Miss Gillespie's twin brother, and it is believed the motive of the murder was to gain possession of her property, which it is stated is very valuable.

From the moment that the assassination became known to the inhabitants of Rising Sun, ugly rumors were circulated connecting the relatives of the murdered girl with the crime, so that the findings of the grand jury were not a surprise. Instead, it seemed to give general satisfaction to the citizens of the place, for they felt convinced that the shot had been fired by James Gillespie, and that the other three persons had knowledge of the deed, either before or after it was done. The two women were released, each on a \$10,000 bond, signed by some of the most prominent citizens of the town. James Gillespie and Myron Barbour are still in jail.

The real motive for the killing of Miss Gillespie, in spite of the fact that 55 witnesses have been examined, is still shrouded in mystery. At the time of her death it was not believed that she had an enemy on earth. She was a lovely character, one of the most respected young women of the town, and possessed of considerable personal means. So far as was known, up to the time of the tragedy, the family relationship of the Gillespies was ideal; but no sooner had the assassination occurred than gossip became rife concerning James Gillespie's treatment of his twin sister. To refute these rumors it was discovered that Miss Gillespie had a couple of years previous to this time taken out a large insurance policy, in which the brother was made the beneficiary. This was contrary to the rules of the company, but a special ruling was made for her

benefit, and the policy was issued payable to James Gillespie in event of her death.

The horrible nature of the crime, however, did not deter the officials from making efforts to search out the person or persons who were guilty of the deed. They ignored the insurance policy and began the most rigid examination of evidence. The deeper they delved into the mystery and the more witnesses they examined, the stronger became the chain of circumstantial evidence connecting James Gillespie with the murder. The testimony of Mrs. J. S. Campbell and Mrs. James Boyle, relatives and neighbors, was the positive link in the chain connecting him with the murder. It is stated on high authority that they told the jury that after the shot was fired and they had followed Mrs. Seward into the back yard, James Gillespie was there, and he was telling his sister, "Keep still; don't make so much noise." The particular testimony that is said to have involved Myron Barbour in a statement made by Harry Carson, who swore that when Barbour and Earl Seward were going for the doctor, the former clutched Seward by the arm and kissed in the boy's ear: "He oughtn't to have shot, for the sake of the old grandmother."

Numerous incidents are reported to have been called to the attention of the grand jury concerning the bitter hatred that Mrs. Barbour had for Elizabeth Gillespie. It was also brought out that she had made vicious threats against her. That she exerted a powerful influence over James Gillespie is an open secret in Rising Sun. And the farmers who brought in a statement heard harrowing stories of unrelenting persecution of the murdered woman, of abuse and indignities heaped upon her, of personal violence to which she was once or twice subjected, and they came to the conclusion, whether right or wrong the court and jury will determine, that Miss Gillespie was the victim of a conspiracy, in which four persons, all relatives, were directly or indirectly implicated.

It is believed that the strange, unnatural conduct of these relatives after the girl was shot, and up to the time of her funeral, in ignoring her and the aged mother, had weight with the jury and influenced them in their final report.

The relationship of the parties in this celebrated case is a matter of interest. James Gillespie, the twin brother of the murdered girl, is nearly 28 years old. Mrs. Seward is his sister. Mrs. Myron Barbour is a sister of the wife of Dr. William Gillespie, of Cincinnati, and a niece of that A. A. Beamy, of Cincinnati. Myron Barbour, her husband, was born and reared in Rising Sun, and was, at the time of his arrest, assistant cashier in a bank. The family is an old and honored one, and has resided in this place for 85 years. Mrs. Carrie Barbour and her sister, the wife of Dr. Gillespie, were reared near Kokomo, Ind. Their father was the late Rev. P. S. Reamy, a popular United Brethren minister.

When a resident of Kokomo 15 years ago Mrs. Barbour was considered one of the belles of the town. One of her sisters there is a Mrs. Miller. Mrs. Barbour has many friends in Kokomo who are loth to believe that she is guilty.

In her unusual affliction old Mrs. Gillespie has been attended by her two sons, William and Robert. The accused were related to many people in Ohio County and they are known to all. The jurors know them as well as others, and the conditions are such that the results come closely home to almost all who have participated in the investigation. The grandfather, father and brother of the victim were all prominent physicians. Miss Gillespie's father ranked high as an Army

surgeon in the Civil War, and was afterward Mayor of Rising Sun.

ABEEL CAUGHT IN CANADA.

Believed to Be the Impersonator of J. Ogden Goelet, Jr.

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y., Dec. 22.—There is no doubt in the minds of the police that the man arrested on the Canadian side of the river last night is James Abeel, of New York, who, it is believed, posed as J. Ogden Goelet, Jr., and, claiming relationship to the well-known Goelet family, became engaged to Miss Grace Anderson, of New York.

On Wednesday of last week two men went to the Savoy Hotel at Niagara Falls, Ont., and registered from Chicago. One of them gave his name as F. S. Hall and the other W. K. Hall. Last night Chief of Police Malins, of the Ontario force, received a telegram asking him to arrest F. S. Hall, who, the message said, is wanted in New York on a charge of forgery. Abeel has engaged counsel and will fight extradition. He refused to make a statement further than to declare he has committed no crime. He will be arraigned tomorrow.

If Abeel refuses to return to New York the officials admit that they will be at a standstill, because the extradition laws, it is said, will not cover the case. Abeel said tonight:

"So much trouble has been made for me by the police and newspapers that I do not know but what I will return and prove my innocence. I am entirely innocent of impersonating J. Ogden Goelet, Jr. or any other Goelet. The fact that I am making my home in Canada under an assumed name is purely a personal matter. My family is well acquainted with my reasons. I have communicated with my relatives and if it is thought best, I shall return to New York and then the truth as far as I am concerned will become known."

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