

TIED UP WITH RED TAPE AT PANAMA

WE ARE LOSING \$20,000 A DAY WHILE THERE IS HAGGLING OVER THE PRICE OF TRIFLES

PANAMA, April 6.—(Special Corr. of The Sunday Oregonian.)—Uncle Sam is likely to lose millions through the Miss Nancy's of Congress before the canal is completed. They have already begun their investigations of the petty emergency purchases made by the Canal Commission, and they insist that everything shall be done by slow Government methods, backed by Congressional action. Such methods are all right in ordinary Government business, but just now they are like great iron balls chained to the legs of the engineers, retarding their work at an enormous cost in money and, I might almost say, in life as well. Farther on in this letter I shall show how such delays have affected the hospitals and how they are retarding the actual work on the canal. At this initial stage the Government cannot afford to be penny wise and pound foolish. The work is already started, and the high-priced men are on the ground. There is an immediate need of all sorts of supplies, and emergencies are bound to come from time to time which will demand the immediate expenditure of comparatively large sums at a moment's notice. On such occasions minor mistakes may occur, a few men may make more than an ordinary profit, but the saving in money and health will be enormous.

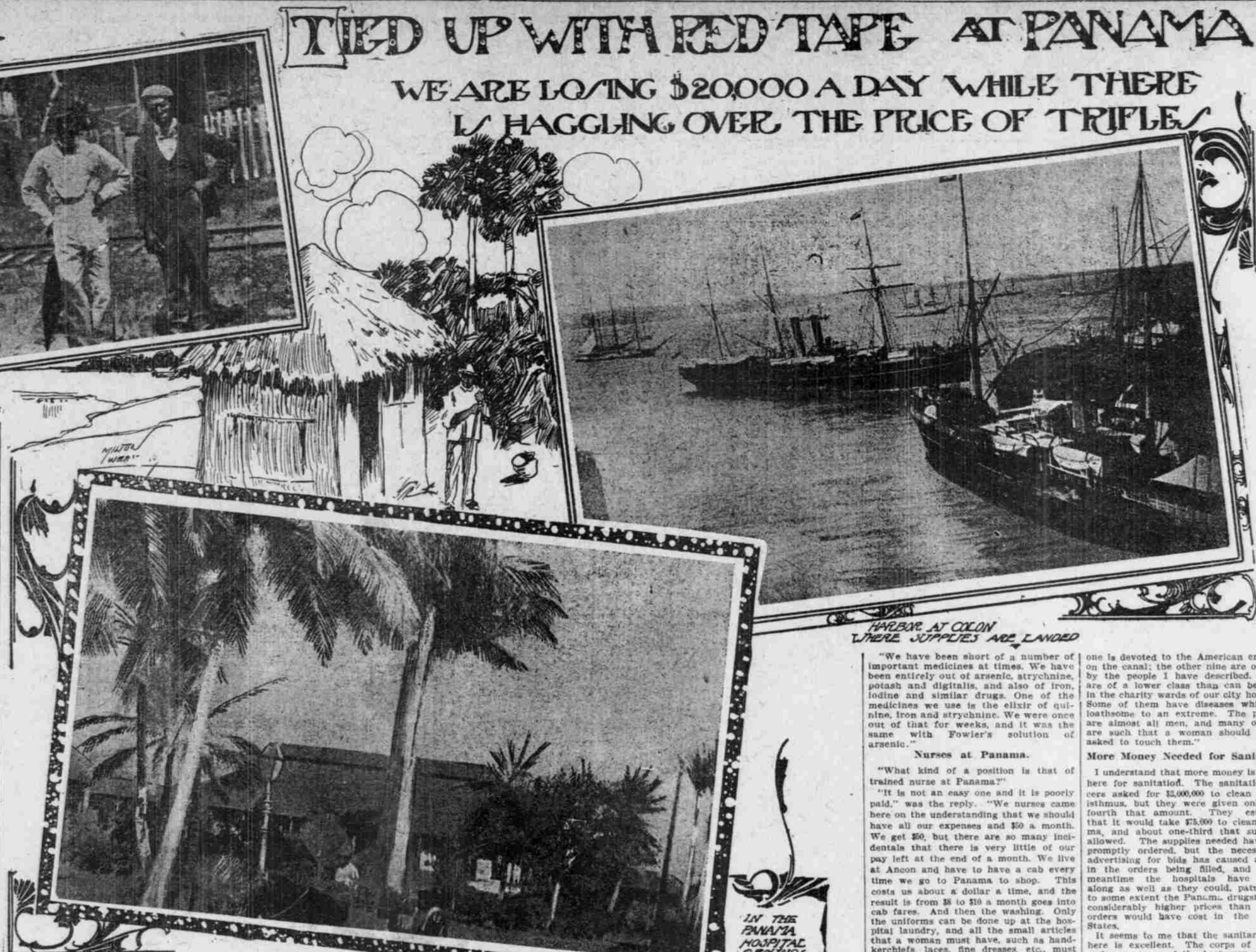
A Loss of \$20,000 a Day.

The parents who have boys on the isthmus will be interested in the matter of health. The taxpayers are interested in pushing the work on the canal, for every day of delay will cost them at least \$20,000. We are to spend on the canal, including the money we have already given the French, about \$200,000,000, and it is estimated that it will take from ten to twelve years to build it. At 2 per cent the annual interest cost on that sum will be equal to \$4,000,000, but as the money will be gradually invested, the interest should be averaged from beginning to end, and it will be only half the above sum, or \$2,000,000 a year. The engineers tell me that the cost of the engineering, administration, sanitation and general expenses, which will be about the same throughout the work, will approximate \$2,000,000 a year, which, added to the \$4,000,000, makes \$6,000,000 for these two elements for each year it is building. This is the time value of the work. The moment the canal is done this expense stops and the canal becomes a live account, instead of a dead one on our National ledger.

Now, six and a half million dollars, divided by 30, means \$200,000 for each working day, and that is what the delay will cost us year in and year out. For every day that Congress haggles over the price we shall have to spend \$200,000. Every working hour will cost us \$3,000, and every working minute means a loss of more than \$50, that loss going on at the rate of 30 cents per second at every watch tick the working day through.

Red Tape at Panama.

Indeed, Congress is making such a fuss about the petty items of expense at Panama that both the commission and the engineers are afraid to buy the actual necessities without a lot of red tape that makes their actual cost ten times as great as though they were bought at double prices. We are building and repairing something like 200 houses here. The other day an order was sent to Washington for 12,000 doors to be forwarded immediately. The Panama department of material and supplies advised that they be purchased in the open market, but one of the commissioners tells me that they would not dare to do so, for Congress would surely investigate such an outrageous action. Other orders have been made for picks and shovels, others for water pipe, machinery, large and small, and for a hundred other things which the work imperatively needs; but ships come and ships go, and the supplies are not here.



orders were sent in for blue print paper months ago. All drawings and engineering reports are copied on this paper, and it is almost a necessity to the furtherance of the work. I suppose it will come in time.

As to the waffle irons and muffin tins, made much of in one Congressional investigation, they were probably the part of a furniture order. The United States gives quarters to its American employees. It has already bought 400 or more sets of furniture for this purpose. It will need all sorts of ranges and kitchen supplies, and I suppose the Miss Nancy's of Congress will demand that each stove lid and stove holder be duly advertised for competitive bids, while in the meantime our good American laborers may do their cooking on spits.

As far as I can see there is no extravagance here. The chief kicks among the men at the top are not on account of personal discomfort, but from the delay which occurs in the lack of tools for expediting their work.

Story of Twelve Whitewash Brushes.

Indeed all sorts of stories are told here at Panama as to how red tape works in the Government service. A very pertinent one, which, however, I do not believe, is the story of the 12 whitewash brushes. According to this one of the sanitary officers in the middle of the zone had sent in an order for 12 men to come to his station to do some whitewashing to make the place sanitary, and at the same time he sent in a requisition for 12 whitewash brushes. The men came all right, but the order for the whitewash brushes had to pass through the Government mails and the clerks in charge first mailed a query to the sanitary agent as to whether nine whitewash brushes would not do quite as well. He replied that they would not, and in the course of two days the extra three brushes arrived.

Meanwhile three men had been waiting for a chance to get in their work, and their wages footed up many times the cost of the brushes.

I might also tell the story of a feather duster upon which bids are alleged to have been gotten at the Panama shops and other stories, but such things are only illustrative of Government methods which are better understood in Washington than here. The truth is the men at Panama use every means possible to get what they want for their work. Some of the employes even take money out of their own pockets and buy at the stores, trusting to be paid back in the future. The French supplies and machinery on hand have been of enormous value, and the French warehouses are ransacked to supply many deficiencies.

A Business Administration.

Indeed the enormous interest and working cost of building the canal demand that it should be pushed to completion as rapidly as possible. We need a modern business administration, with modern business methods. We need men who will look at the commercial side of every proposition, as well as the technical and political sides.

In order to shorten the time we should first adopt a careful, well-considered and comprehensive general scheme of work and then have an administration which will see that the labor, material and machinery necessary to vigorously prosecute that work are promptly furnished.

This means that we must have a one-man power at the head of all things connected with the construction of the canal, and that this power must be on the ground with authority to meet emergencies and with authority to act without the delay incident to making reports to some other authority. 2000 miles away and without waiting one or two

months of waiting before any important individual move can be made.

It means that the ordinary restrictions of our routine government work should be modified, and that those which prevail in our great railroads and other business institutions should take their place. It means the abolition of the red tape which now holds us as such work, and that everything should be done to hurry on the completion of the canal at the earliest possible moment. It means that we should have the best and most improved machinery, that no time should be wasted in experimenting, and that only machinery which has been in actual use and has stood the test of actual service should be employed. This is the idea of the engineers here, and as I have shown, in describing the handling of the Colebras cut, it will make possible the completion of the canal in a comparatively short time.

It seems to me that if a man like the chief engineer were given entire charge of the work at Panama, with a large enough contingent fund to meet every possible emergency and with the authority to act in emergencies, as far as the isthmus is concerned, and if at the same time a man of similar ability and training could be placed under the Secretary of War and the President at the Washington end of the line the canal would go jumping from now on to the finish. This, of course, means consulting and advisory engineers for Mr. Wallace, and it also means plenty of assistance for the men at the other end, with the President at the head as the boss of the whole.

Some of the most serious delays, caused, I suppose, by advertisements for bids, have been in supplying the hospitals. Several of the doctors have told me that they have been out of drugs for a considerable time, but it was not

until this morning that I had a detailed statement as to the lack of medical and surgical necessities. My informant is one of the American trained nurses who has been employed at Ancon for several months. Said she:

"We have had great trouble in getting things of all kinds on time. When the Americans took hold, supplies were sent down for a hospital of 100 beds. We have now 300 beds in use and no proportionate increase of supplies. This means a lack of basins, rubber sheetings, lamps and lanterns. We have had only a few temperature thermometers. In my ward I had 25 patients and in order to get a thermometer to take their temperature I had to go to another ward to borrow one. This was the case in other wards, and it so resulted that in one ward no temperature was taken from 1 P. M. until 9 A. M. the next day. The nurse in charge of that ward would have had to go out in the dark, down the hill, through the trees to another ward to borrow a thermometer. She was afraid and did not go, and I don't blame her. Such thermometers cannot cost more than 50 cents apiece at wholesale.

"Another thing we needed but could not get," the nurse went on, "was absorbent cotton and gauze. We ordered it from the United States, but it takes a month to get an ordinary purchase through, and for weeks we lacked this material to dress wounds and drain them. We use old mosquito netting for a time, and also bought cheese cloth of the Panama stores and tried that. The cheese cloth contained starch, and when it became dry, it would make a covering over the wound standing out from it. I do not know that any injury resulted from this, but it was certainly a great annoyance to the doctors and nurses."

Nurses at Panama.

"What kind of a position is that of trained nurse at Panama?" "It is not an easy one and it is poorly paid," was the reply. "We nurses came here on the understanding that we should have all our expenses and \$50 a month. We get \$50, but there are so many incidents that there is very little of our pay left at the end of a month. We live at Ancon and have to have a cab every time we go to Panama to shop. This costs us about a dollar a time, and the result is from \$8 to \$10 a month goes into cab fares. And then the washing. Only the uniforms can be done up at the hospital laundry, and all the small articles that a woman must have, such as handkerchiefs, lace, fine dresses, etc., must be washed outside. This costs on the average about \$5 per month. In addition there are many other expenses, so that all told, one makes much less here than at home."

More Money Needed for Sanitation.

I understand that more money is needed here for sanitation. The sanitation officers asked for \$2,000,000 to clean up the isthmus, but they were given only one-fourth that amount. They estimated that it would take \$25,000 to clean Panama, and about one-third that sum was allowed. The supplies needed have been promptly ordered, but the necessity of advertising for bids has caused a delay in the orders being filled, and in the meantime the hospitals have gotten along as well as they could, patronizing to some extent the Panama druggists at considerably higher prices than similar orders would have cost in the United States.

It seems to me that the sanitary force here is excellent. The corps of doctors embraces some of the best men of their profession, and both doctors and nurses are doing earnest and conscientious work. As to the matter of supplies, one of the doctors recommends that a medical purveyor be put at the head of the medical supply department for Panama at New York, and that he be paid \$5000 a year. This man would be in close connection with the hospitals here, and would keep in touch with the markets at home. He would see that Panama has always a full month's hospital supplies in advance, and a large enough reserve supply to meet any emergency. Indeed, some such provision would seem to be almost a necessity in the present condition of the isthmus. (Copyright, 1905.)

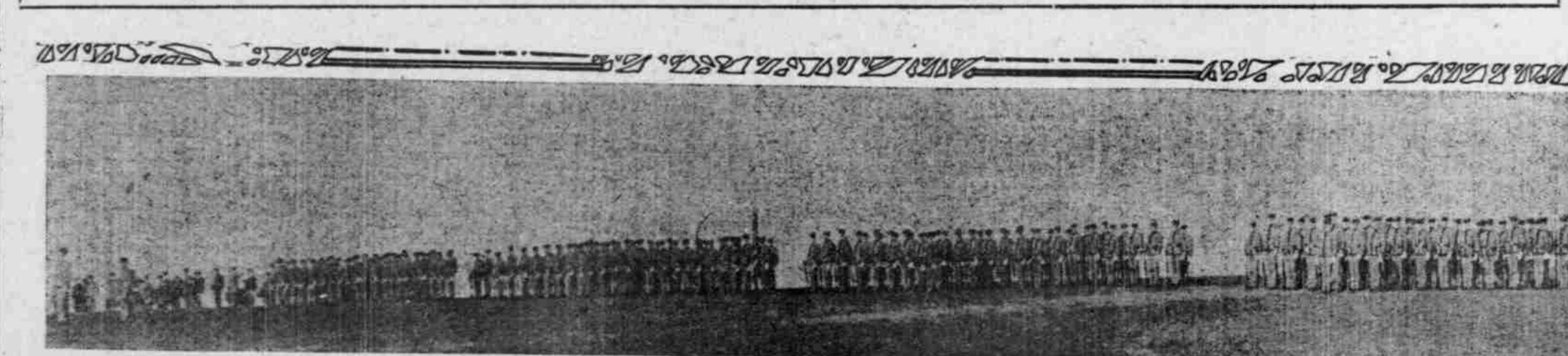
Willing to Oblige.

Sydney (N. S. W.) Bulletin. I was walking in a Northern Maori township one morning, when a woman rushed from a house. A weary individual was a bit ahead of me; seeing him by the arm, the woman implored him to run for the doctor, as her husband had accidentally swallowed some poison. A bicycle stood by the gate; sighting it, the female breathlessly asked: "Can you ride a bike?" The man deliberately looked it over as he lit his pipe; then he replied: "Well, no; but it wouldn't take me long to learn."

Eighteen-Inch Moustache Burned Up

Seaford Corr. Philadelphia Record. While burning brush on his farm here today William Walwright discovered the fire was threatening his home, and in attempting to check the flames was badly burned, losing his moustache, measuring 18 inches from tip to tip. Dewey, his pet dog, seemed to realize the danger, and worked heroically to extinguish the fire by beating it with his paws. Walwright's moustache has been his pride for 20 years, and he had trained it wonderfully. He could easily draw it to the back of his neck and tie a knot in it.

Washington Cadets Who Will Be Here at Opening of the Lewis and Clark Fair



CADET BATTALION STATE COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON

PHOTO BY HUDSON PULLMAN

PULLMAN, Wash., April 26.—(Special Correspondent of the Sunday Oregonian.)—The cadet battalion of the State College of Washington will hold their annual encampment in Portland during the great Lewis and Clark Exposition this Summer. Four infantry companies, a military band of 30 pieces, and the Signal Corps constitute the battalion, whose entire strength is 300. A special train over the

O. R. & N. has been definitely secured. It will leave Pullman either on the morning or evening of May 26, and will arrive in Portland in time for the cadets to make camp on the 1st of May. Then all will be in readiness for the opening exercises of June 1. It is not definitely known here whether or not the cadets will participate in the opening exercises. The State College battalion is taking a great interest in the contests to be

held at the Fair in military drills with cadet corps of other institutions. Battalion drills are becoming spirited, and the State College hopes to have the best drilled battalion on the grounds. Company drills are excellent, and each company here is expecting to be declared the best drilled company there. Regular army officers who are to judge these contests will also be asked to decide which is the best company of the college bat-

tallions, and this company will be awarded a silver cup, which is annually presented at Pullman. This will be separate from the inter-battalion contest. Guardmounting here has also been given a stimulus lately. Colonel Sapp is supervising this department. Each day an orderly is selected from the guard and is excused from the following drill for the honor. The cadets are under the able instruc-

tion of Captain Edward Kimmel, U. S. A. Artillery Corps, Captain Kimmel, who was recently in Portland to select the camp site, is a graduate of the State College of Washington. He entered college from Washington and was cadet private just the same as the rest of them. He went through the same things that he is now instructing the cadets in. He graduated in 1888 and was appointed second Lieutenant by President McKinley,

fought in the Philippines and came back to Fortress Monroe, where he was soon made Captain of Artillery. Captain Kimmel is only 27 years old and was assigned to the college here only after persistent efforts by President Bryan, who wanted an army officer who had himself been a common cadet like the rest of the battalion. He is very popular with the cadets because he understands his men; yet he is a strict disciplinarian.



CAPT. EDWARD KIMMEL, U.S.A. ARTILLERY CORPS, COLONEL-IN-CHIEF