

LAS VEGAS AGE

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THE AVIATION BILL

It is a matter of National interest that, out of all the turmoil of the late lamented 75th Congress, has come at least one fine, sensible and constructive piece of legislation — the so-called Aviation Bill, fathered by Senator McCarran and persistently pushed by him during the past four years. In fact some eastern newspapers of importance declare it to be "the only piece of constructive legislation" to come out of the Congress.

Aviation was in a sorry enough mess before administration officials cancelled all air-mail contracts and wrecked the air lines of the country. Since then they have been slowly and painfully making their way back toward prosperity in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles.

There was no centralization of authority; no placing of responsibility and no coordination of policy on the part of the four different bureaus of three different departments of the government. On the contrary all bureaus having authority over any of the activities of air lines were jealous, suspicious and antagonistic toward whatever any other bureau might suggest. That the air lines were able to exist and carry on at all is proof of the high optimism and nerve of their leaders.

Henceforth, thanks to the McCarran Bill, air transportation will be under an independent commission which will have powers to regulate air lines in all respects as the Interstate Commerce Commission regulates and controls the railroads.

The prediction is made that now, the handicap of divided control being removed, the air commerce of America will develop with great rapidity and that the terrible disasters that have marked its painful course in the past will soon be entirely eliminated.

PLEASANT SUMMER

Las Vegas thus far has enjoyed an unusually pleasant summer and we hear again speculation on the influence that Lake Mead has on our climate.

Of course there will be plenty of hot weather before the summer ends although, perhaps, not as much as usual.

But it is extremely unlikely that Lake Mead will have the slightest effect in modifying the climate of the Las Vegas area. Engineers who have studied this and similar problems for many years declare that Lake Mead will have just about as much effect on this intermountain region as a bucket of water set in the middle of a 40-acre field would have on the climate of the field.

Although Lake Mead is a large body of water compared with other inland lakes and reservoirs, it is extremely small when compared with the vast area of this inter-mountain country.

The fact that other similar bodies of water have not modified the climate of the regions about them is pointed out. For example, Salton Sea, created in Imperial Valley early in the present century has not changed the climate of the Valley in the slightest degree. Walker Lake and Pyramid Lake in Nevada, and Great Salt Lake in Utah are also pointed to as examples where there has been no change of climate because of the proximity of comparatively large bodies of water.

So we in Las Vegas may just as well take our summer heat with such equanimity as we may and be thankful when we are given a little respite as happens this season.

OBSERVATIONS

By CHARLES P. SQUIRES

YELLOW JACKET

Showing of the motion picture "Yellow Jack" at El Portal Theatre recently, recalled to many of us oldsters the tragic fight waged by a comparatively small group of doctors under General Georgas of the United States Army, during the closing years of the last century and the opening ones of the new.

So it seemed a coincidence the other day when a Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Davidson came to visit Dr. Roy W. Martin and the story of Doc's adventures with the Yellow Fever scourge in Mexico in 1903 came to me in detail.

Following his graduation from University Medical College, Kansas City, Mo., Dr. Martin had two burning ambitions... to adventure into strange lands and amass a fortune; and to alleviate the suffering of humanity.

DR. MARTIN IN MEXICO

With the same enthusiastic enterprise which has characterized his career in Las Vegas our friends Doc., with another young classmate doctor penetrated the tropical wilds of Mexico and stopped at Montemoreales, a city of approximately 15,000 located on the Gulf slope south of the larger city of Monterey, in the state of Tamaulipas. And there fate accepted the challenge which the young doctor had hurled at the World.

YELLOW JACK COMES

In spite of the efforts of the authorities to keep the scourge of yellow fever then raging in the Gulf coast cities from entering, a sick German reached Monterrey. His case was at once recognized as yellow fever and the authorities at once had him loaded on the train to be sent back to Tampico whence he came. At the state line a quarantine station by this time was being established by the government and the sick man was held there without care or medical attention.

Dr. Martin, with the high ideals of the medical profession fresh in mind, volunteered to go and care for the German and secured an order from the German consul in Monterrey to treat the patient. He went to the border quarantine camp, but the local authorities would not permit him to approach. Doc at once returned to Monterrey and secured an order from the governor of the state. Again he was refused permission to see the patient who was still lying, desperately ill, at the crude quarantine station without any attention whatever, the authorities, sure that he would die, not wishing to take chances of spreading the deadly scourge.

Again Doctor Martin returned to Monterrey and this time appealed to the federal authorities. Promptly, by direction of that great President Porfirio Diaz, came an order permitting the young doctor to go anywhere he wished in pursuit of his profession, to practice in any hospital or quarantine camp in Mexico, and to ride any train or other means of transportation free of charge. This order was respected and Dr. Martin went to the quarantine camp and took charge of the patient, who, in spite of previous neglect, finally recovered.

In the meantime, the particular variety of mosquitoes which General

Gorgas and his assistants had identified as the sole carriers of the deadly Yellow Jack, had penetrated to that region and despite the crude efforts of local authorities to quarantine, were carried supposedly in railroad cars, to all parts of the district.

Among those stricken was this American, Davidson. Dr. Martin went to the home and did everything possible to aid him and the sick man recovered, crediting the young doctor with saving his life. And so it happened that, after thirty-five years of diverging ways, Mr. and Mrs. Davidson came to Las Vegas the other day, walked into El Patio Hotel and were at once recognized by Dr. Martin as his former friends.

THE TERRIBLE SCOURGE

To return to Mexico. By the time terrible scourge of yellow fever was Mr. Davidson was recovering the sweeping that portion of Mexico. Terror seized upon the people as yellow fever deaths mounted to thousands. The daily processions of ox carts loaded with the stacked-up bodies of those who died the night before added to the panic. In Monterrey, the city of one hundred thousand population was reduced by yellow fever deaths and the exodus of those who were able to travel to the mountain resort of Saltillo, to one fourth of its former size. Dr. Martin's home town of Montemoreales was reduced from 15,000 to 5,000.

DR. MARTIN HAS YELLOW FEVER

Nine days after he left the German patient, Dr. Martin was himself seized by the scourge and went through a terrible struggle for life. Following his recovery, however, he was thankful that he had had the disease and was thereafter immune and able to minister to yellow fever patients without danger. He chummed up with three reporters sent down by American newspapers to report the scourge and, of course they at once formed a quartette, their favorite song being a parody on "La Paloma" which consisted mainly in an insulting challenge to Yellow Jack. In this way the young Americans reinforced their morale and carried on in the face of general terror and sorrow.

A GIRL MAYOR

Dr. Martin, among many other incidents of that terrible period of his life, tells of the fate of the Mayor of Icnaras, a city of 25,000, who, in the midst of his duties, died of Yellow Jack. His wife assumed the duties of the office and she too was taken. One by one other members of the family died of the scourge until finally only a fifteen-year old daughter was left, and she, with true Mexican courage and stoicism, carried on as Mayor of the city, superintending the carting away of the daily loads of dead and the efforts to nurse and protect the living during those months of terror when Yellow Jack was king supreme.

Finally, with the change of season the plague subsided and people began to trickle back to the cities and their homes many of which had been looted and partially or wholly destroyed.

And then Dr. Martin came to Las Vegas.