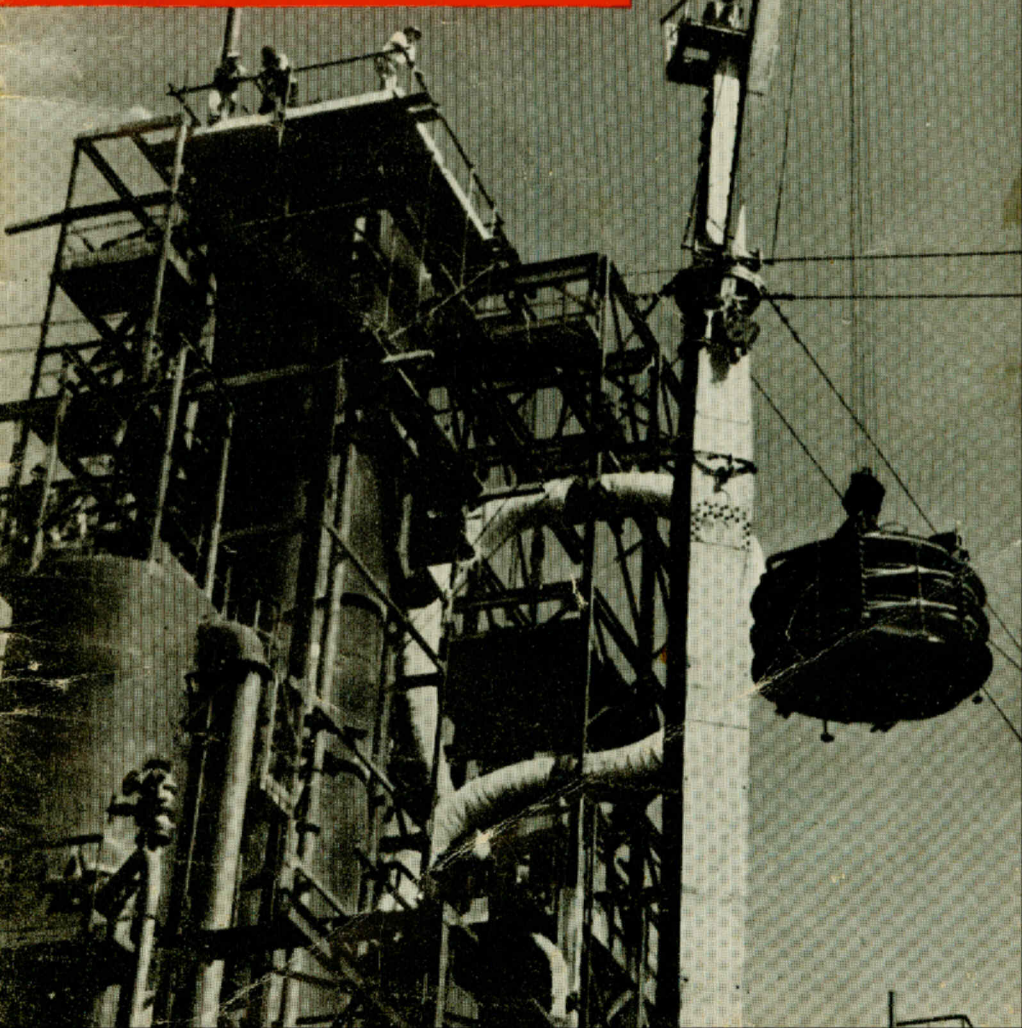


Your
Job with Lago
in Aruba



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WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MAY 26 1943

Mr. W. J. Haley, President,
Lago Oil and Transport Company Ltd.
30 Rockefeller Plaza,
New York, New York.

Dear Mr. Haley:

The Commanding General, Caribbean Defense Command has recently called to my attention the excellent production record of your Refinery at Aruba, and the splendid work being performed by your employees in expending extra efforts to increase the production of aviation fuel, which is so highly essential to the war program.

While not under direct military control, your organization is an integral cog in the military service of our country and I wish to take this opportunity to commend each and every one of your employees for their part in carrying on this important, patriotic service which they are rendering in the present emergency. Especially do I wish to convey to each and every individual in your organization in Aruba, the fact that I consider their services in this work as important in the war program as the work of members of the armed forces. Our magnificent planes, manned by the most highly trained personnel would be impotent indeed without the higher grade fuel oil these good people are so patriotically producing.

I am sure this good work will continue with unabated effort.

Sincerely yours,



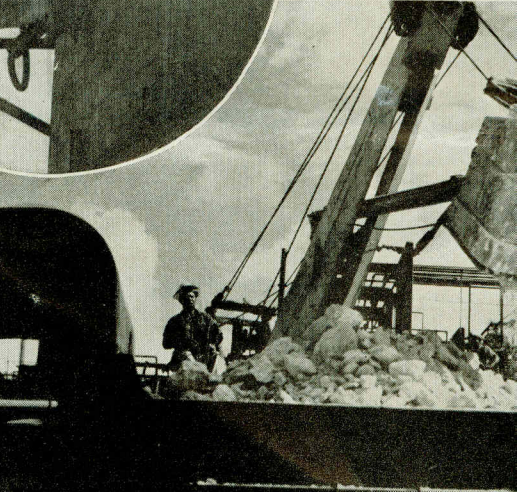
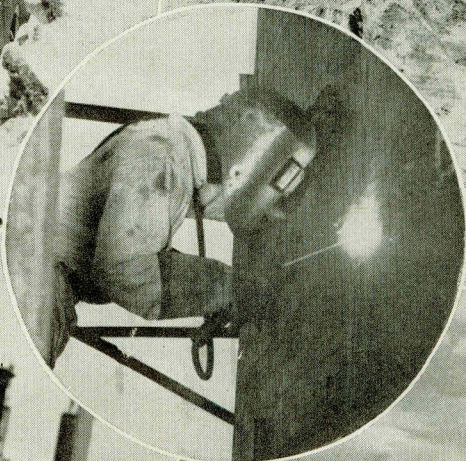
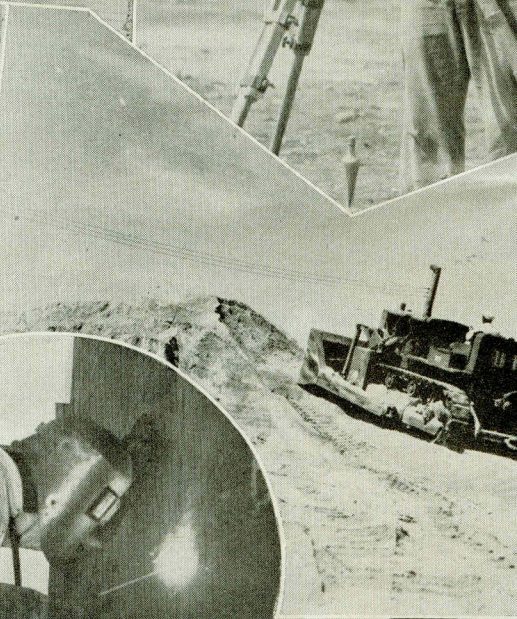
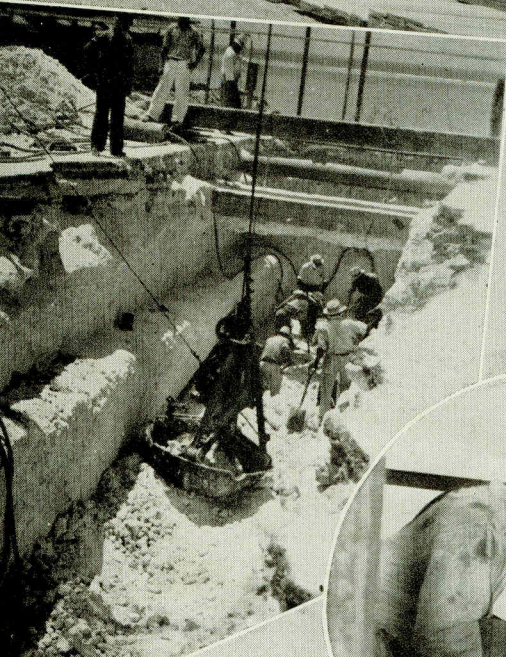
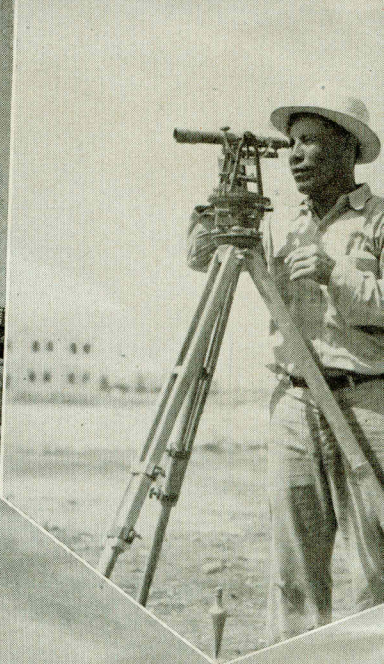
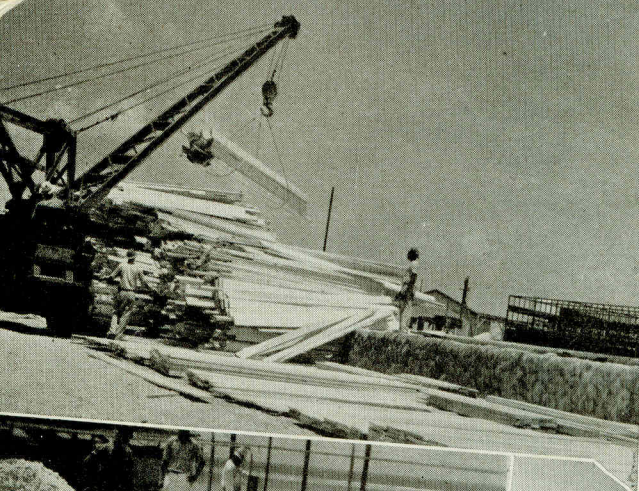
ROBERT P. PATTERSON,
Under Secretary of War.

Your Job with Lago in Aruba



The Company's Personnel Department in New York provides all new employees with an official statement of the conditions that govern their employment. Because of rapidly changing circumstances, it is possible that portions of this booklet may not be in exact accordance with such employment conditions, or may otherwise become out-of-date in the months following its publication. Therefore it must necessarily be considered as a general picture of working and living conditions in Aruba, and not as a conclusive statement of policies.

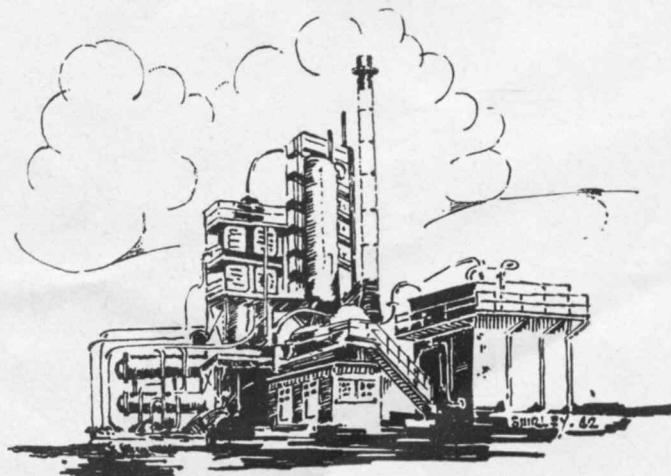
Published by the
Lago Oil & Transport Company, Ltd.
Aruba, Netherlands West Indies



WITH your acceptance of a job with the Lago Oil & Transport Company, Ltd., for work in Aruba, Netherlands West Indies, you have also accepted a vital part in the war effort of the United Nations. Lago's products flow steadily to the mechanical forces on many battlefronts, and you have joined the several thousand workers who are maintaining that flow in ever-increasing quantities.

This refinery is, in quantity of crude oil processed, the largest in the world. Its employees, many of whom have been in Aruba for periods ranging from ten to fifteen years, are proud of the refinery and of their work in it. In joining them you place yourself on one of Democracy's important firing lines.

While in most respects life in Aruba follows its normal course, in some ways you will be living and working under wartime conditions; also, you will have adjustments to make due to living in a small American colony on a foreign tropical island. This booklet is designed to help you make those adjustments by giving you a knowledge of working and living conditions at Lago's Aruba refinery.



Your Working Hours

It is generally the intention of the Company that employees shall work not more than 48 hours per week, and shall have one day of rest in seven. This schedule cannot always be followed rigidly, because of the infinite variety of types of work in an oil refinery, and because of emergency work conditions such as now exist.

Special conditions may at any time require the services of employees for varying periods in excess of standard working hours on or holidays or regular days off. Adequate provision will always be made, however, for the need for normal recreation and relaxation.

Pay for overtime varies according to the working schedule. Most straight-day workers are on a 48-hour per week basis, and receive overtime compensation in cash for hours in excess of 48. The standard schedule for shift workers is 50.4 hours per week, with overtime compensation in cash for hours in excess of 48. However, due to extended emergency conditions in certain operations, regular working hours may be increased substantially above 8 hours per day and 48 hours per week with corresponding overtime pay in accordance with existing policy.

Your Medical Care

Hospitalization

The Company maintains a well-staffed and well-equipped hospital for the medical care of its employees, as well as a plant dispensary for minor injuries and emergency cases. Free hospitalization and free medical attention are provided within the limits of the facilities available at Aruba, which are sufficient for all ordinary purposes. When extraordinary treatment is required, however, necessitating the employee's temporary departure from Aruba, such treatment is for his own account.

(Note: A fully-accredited American dentist practices in the Colony. His services are not included in allowances to employees, except in industrial accident cases necessitating dental services, in which event charges are paid by the Company.)

Sickness Benefits

Foreign staff employees are entitled to sickness benefits to the extent of two weeks at full pay during the first year of credited service; after the completion of one year's service, the allowance is four weeks at full pay, with an additional period at half pay

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depending on length of service. The allowable periods both at full pay and at half pay increase as length of service increases.

(Note: These provisions apply only to employees while on active duty at or travel time to and from Aruba. Sickness benefits and free medical service do not apply to employees who are on home furlough or an inactive service status.)

Death Benefits

The Thrift Plan includes a non-contributory provision for death benefits of one year's salary to the beneficiaries of participants. No death benefits are paid to beneficiaries of non-participants in non-industrial death cases.

Benefits paid in case of death resulting from an industrial cause are determined according to the New Jersey Compensation Act, which calls for a percentage of wages to be paid for a specified period, set according to the number and status of surviving dependents.

If You Have an Accident

The policy followed in cases of industrial accidents is in accordance with the New Jersey Compensation Act. Industrial sickness benefits of full pay are allowed during the first 16 weeks of disability, and two-thirds pay during the succeeding 36 weeks.



One of several operating rooms in the Company hospital

You Will Have Vacations With Pay

The vacations with pay which are granted employees at Aruba are of special importance in affording a change of scene. Because of the smallness of the island and the comparatively limited variety of entertainment available, a periodic refreshing of outlook is essential to preserve interest in the job and in one's daily life.

At the present time (mid-1943) certain benefits are being offered employees as an inducement to extend their stay beyond the normal two-year period of employment. However, the local vacation policy, giving opportunity for periods of relaxation or travel aside from regular home furlough, has been liberalized to allow for this "change of pace," even though the customary trip to the United States may be temporarily deferred.

Home Furlough

Regular home furlough accrues at the rate of 21 days for each year of service, beginning on the date of arrival at Aruba. Furlough credits for service over two years accrue at the rate of one day of furlough for each eighteen days worked. Furlough with pay is granted only if the employee completes two years at Aruba, or if his termination before that time is due to no fault of his own, in which case he receives the furlough earned on a pro rata basis.

The maximum travel time pay that is allowed in conjunction with a furlough is to the employee's "point of origin," and the actual furlough does not start until such time as the point of origin would normally be reached by the most direct route. When an employee elects to spend his time at a point closer to Aruba than his point of origin, then travel time is allowed only to such closer location. Transportation expenses involved in returning to the United States, and inland mileage allowance of five and one-half cents per mile (maximum 2,000 miles), are allowed in addition to travel time pay.



Free dispensary treatment is available to all employees

Local Vacation

New employees are eligible for a local vacation of two weeks with pay after the completion of one year of credited service at Aruba. (Transferred employees, or those on second or subsequent periods of employment, are eligible after nine months.)

Additional local vacations may be taken in the same period of employment, if regular home furlough is postponed beyond the due date. Local vacation time cannot be accumulated toward a longer home furlough, nor can two locals be combined, since their sole purpose is to provide interludes for rest or travel during periods of employment.

Full pay is granted during local vacations, but no transportation or other expense allowance is made. Under the present restricted travel conditions these vacations are usually taken in Aruba or Curacao although when travel facilities permit, vacationists may travel by air to such points of interest as Jamaica, Surinam, and various locations in Colombia and Venezuela.

Five Holidays Are Observed

In determining the holidays to be observed, it was necessary to take into consideration legal requirements, local custom, and the economic needs of the business. The resulting schedule calls for five holidays during the year: Good Friday, July 4, Queen's Birthday (August 31), Christmas, and New Year's. On these days the plant customarily operates on a Sunday schedule.

You Can Depend on Fair Treatment

A sound foundation for dealing between employees and Management is insured by the operation of various advisory committees which are elected by the employees. These groups represent the employees in adjusting differences with the Company, and advise Management with respect to policies having to do with working or living conditions.

Foremost of the committees authorized to deal on behalf of foreign staff employees is the Foreign Staff Employees Council of 16 men who are elected from various districts of the Plant with proportionate representation. The F.S.E.C. is authorized to deal with all matters concerning wages, hours, or working conditions. Many of the problems concerning these factors can be solved directly between an employee and his supervisor. If not, however, the employee's councilman may present the matter to the supervisor, to the Personnel department, or to a meeting of the Council

as a whole, which at any time may bring problems to the attention of the Management. The system is flexible to accommodate varying circumstances, and at the same time insures prompt handling of problems.

Committees of more specialized functions are the Bachelor Quarters and Dining Hall Committee, elected by Bachelor Quarters and Dormitory residents; and the Housing and Commissary Committee, elected by bungalow residents. These committees represent their constituents on all matters regarding living conditions in the Colony.

Other employee groups not directly connected with working or living conditions are the Esso Club Advisory Committee, which organizes athletics and assists in the operation of the Esso Club, and the School Advisory Committee, with similar functions in school matters.

In addition there is a Lago Community Council, a strictly community and non-company group composed essentially of the officers of various community organizations within the Lago residential colony. This group coordinates activities of the various organizations where they concern the Colony as a whole, and also administers the funds of the Lago Community War Chest, a project which makes monthly donations to the American Red Cross, the U.S.O., which maintains a canteen for the benefit of American military forces on the island, and other war benefits.



Shown above is a portion of the residential colony, which includes approximately 500 bungalows for employees who have their families at Aruba



A street scene in San Nicolas, the small town that adjoins the refinery

Bond Purchases Are Voluntary

You may, if you wish, purchase United States Defense Bonds through monthly payroll deductions. An employee authorizes a specific amount to be devoted to this purpose, and the purchases continue on this basis until changed or cancelled by the employee. (Those making use of the bond purchase plan are urged to specify an amount which will exactly equal the cost of any particular bond they chose, in order to simplify the operation of the plan.) Bonds purchased will be forwarded to any bank of the employee's choosing, or can be held for him by the Federal Reserve Bank in New York.

Sending Money "Home"

Most employees have salary allotments, which are sent from the Company's New York office. After calculating the approximate amount that will be deducted from salary for Commissary and Club charges, board, room, and laundry charges, cash needed in Aruba, and other deductions, the employee designates a specific amount to be sent each month by allotment check, to a bank or individual, and the amount and payee remain fixed until changed by the employee.

Saving Is Simplified

The Thrift Plan, for which all *permanent* employees may be designated as eligible, is a combination retirement and savings pro-

gram. Involving *regular* saving, with the Company matching a portion of the money contributed by the employee, it provides not only a retirement allowance, but a substantial nest egg in cash, part of which the employee may withdraw from time to time.

Part of the cash balance may be used for the purchase of Standard Oil Company (N. J.) stock, or single premium life insurance. Emergency loans may also be drawn against it at a 2 per cent rate of interest, to be repaid by payroll deductions.

Employees may contribute from 3 to 13 per cent of their pay, the Company matching dollar for dollar the first 3 per cent and fifty cents for each dollar over 3 per cent. Out of the money thus accumulated, a certain portion must be allotted to the purchase of an annuity, which is payable when the employee reaches retirement age, even though he has left the employ of the Company. The balance remains to the employee's credit in the Thrift Fund.

(An additional "early retirement" five per cent may be contributed beyond 13 per cent, and will be matched dollar for dollar. All of this must be used for purchase of additional annuities.)

When he retires or leaves the service of the Company, all money from both his and the Company's contributions not used for the purchase of annuities, stocks, or insurance, and not previously withdrawn is paid to the employee. The annuity and any stocks or insurance purchased by him while a participant in the Plan are, of course, his property as well.

Note: Employees hired on a temporary basis are not eligible for the Thrift Plan.

If You Want Additional Insurance

A group life insurance plan is in effect for the benefit of all permanent employees. Participation is wholly voluntary.

This insurance may be had without a physical examination if application is made within 31 days of the original employment date. Payment of premiums is made by monthly payroll deduction, and the amount of insurance is determined by annual earnings, generally to the nearest upward \$1,000 beyond one year's pay.

Note: Employees hired on temporary basis are not eligible for Group Life Insurance.

Income Tax Is Paid Locally

All employees pay income tax to the Curacao Government. Payroll deductions can be authorized, whereby the tax is paid from earnings in twelve equal installments, or employees may make their

own arrangements for paying the tax direct to the Government collection office.

A tax refund policy has been in effect for several years, under which the Company has refunded to employees any income tax paid which is in excess of the amount they would have paid on a comparable income in the United States. Recent developments, however, make it probable that the U. S. tax will exceed that levied in Aruba, and consequently no refunds can be anticipated until the present relative tax situation again reverses.

Educational Refund Plan

In addition to the activities of the Training Division, which from time to time offers training courses for the benefit of foreign staff employees, the Company maintains an educational refund plan, for sharing with employees the cost of correspondence courses they may take. To benefit by this plan, an employee must have completed one year's service; the course must be taken with a school approved by the Company; the course of study chosen must be approved by the employee's supervisor and by the Training Division; and the course must be completed with satisfactory grades. In any case where these conditions are fulfilled, the Company will bear 50 per cent of the cost of the course.

Your Ideas Are Welcomed

The Company recognizes the fact that you are in a position to observe and formulate improvements in methods, equipment, processes, and safety conditions. When practical, putting these improvements into practice may be beneficial for you, or the Company, or both. As recognition of the value of the suggestions which are accepted for use, the "Coin Your Ideas" Committee, a Plant group that investigates all ideas turned in, makes cash awards according to the merit of the suggestion. Additional awards can be made for exceptional ideas after they have been in practice for a year, and their benefit in savings or improved conditions has been proven.

As a final step, outstanding awards are submitted each year to the Central "Coin Your Ideas" Committee in New York, which makes annual Capital Awards of \$500, \$300, \$200, and \$100 to the four ideas selected as the best from all divisions of the Standard Oil Company (N. J.).

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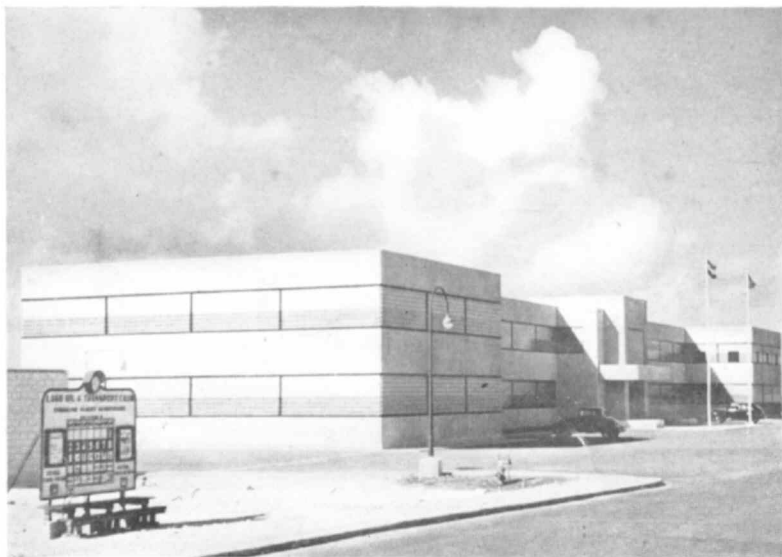
special award plan is also in effect whereby substantial cash awards are made for these particular suggestions.

You Are Helped to Work Safely

The elimination of suffering and reduced efficiency is a cooperative job between employees and the Company. The Management provides technical facilities for protecting employees, maintains an equipment inspection department that periodically checks metal equipment, and maintains a safety department that constantly strives to eliminate actual and potential hazards. All of these, however, in order to be wholly successful, require the conscious effort of every employee to prevent avoidable accidents. Most accidents are avoidable, and most accidents result from a momentary thoughtlessness on the part of a workman. One of the prime characteristics of every first-rate employee is his ability to work safely and to cooperate with the Company in promoting safety for himself and his fellow employee.

Identification Badges Are Carried

For their own as well as the Company's protection against unauthorized persons entering the Plant, all employees are issued



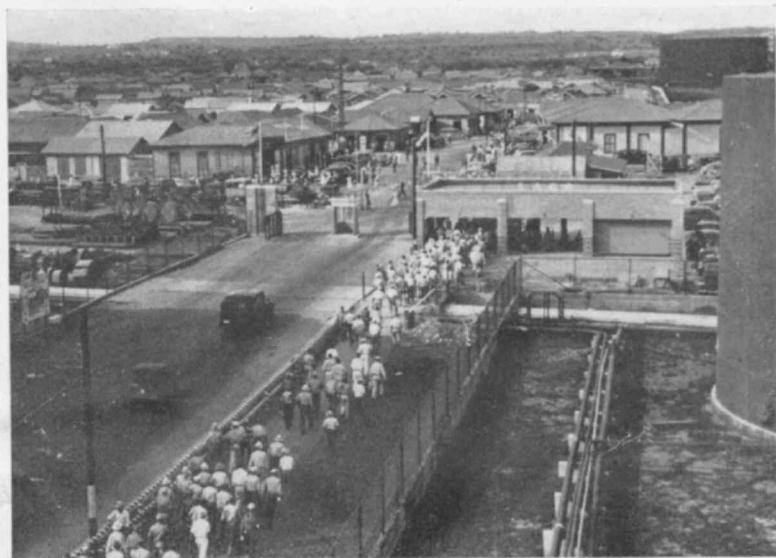
The Company's General Office building

identification badges, which are carried at all times. Company watchmen are stationed at the various gates, and anyone entering the main Company concession, as well as the restricted refinery area, is required to show his badge for their inspection.

Your Living Quarters

Men employed on a single status are housed in Bachelor Quarters (of which there are eight) or in bunkhouses, depending on the space available at the time of their arrival in Aruba. Each room in the Bachelor Quarters opens onto a porch, and the buildings are designed to afford cross-ventilation for each room. The rooms are in pairs, with shower-bathroom between. Furnishings include bed, straight chair, metal spring armchair, table, dresser, bookshelves, bedlight, rug, washstand, and mirrored medicine chest. Bed linen and towels are furnished, and Company-employed stewards maintain the rooms. When a room has two occupants, each man currently pays rent of \$10 per month; when sufficient rooms are available to permit single occupancy, the rent is \$15 per month. (These rates are subject to change.)

The Company operates its own laundry. Collections are made



One of the main gates at the entrance to San Nicolas village

on Saturday mornings, deliveries on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The present charge is eight cents (U. S. currency) per pound.

A dormitory is provided for unmarried women employees, and is occupied chiefly by school teachers and officeworkers. (A separate dormitory near the Hospital provides quarters for nurses.) Twenty-six single rooms are available, each with adjoining shower-bathroom. A privately-operated beauty shop is located in the building.

Dormitory rooms are furnished with bed, vanity with mirror and bench, armchair, writing desk and chair, bed table and bed lamps, and rugs. Radios, curtains, pictures, and other items of decoration or utility are furnished by the occupant if desired. The Company supplies (and launders without charge) towels, sheets, pillowcases, and blankets. Dormitory occupants take their meals at the Company Dining Hall.

The Dining Hall has facilities for serving over 500 persons. All single foreign staff employees eat here, and men working shift are furnished lunches to take on the job. Meals are served boarding-house style. The charge for board is adjusted each quarter, if necessary, to keep it in conformance with food costs. In early 1943 it was \$45 monthly.

One section of the Dining Hall is set aside as a restaurant, for accommodating Company employees in transit through Aruba, commercial travellers having business with the Company, and private dining parties.

All your essential purchases can be made at the Colony Commissary, which is a broadly-stocked general store. An indication of the magnitude of its business, catering to nearly 2,000 residents, is the fact that a recent year's sales amounted to \$1,020,000.

Efforts are made to maintain prices on a level with those in the Bayonne-Bayway (New Jersey) area. Purchases are made either by cash (in Curacao currency) or credit, chargeable monthly to employees' earnings.

Exclusive of food, some of the hundreds of articles sold are toilet articles of all kinds, tobacco, men's haberdashery excluding coats, and a complete line of men's work clothes. Most employees purchase all their clothing needs in Aruba, either at the Commissary or in stores outside the Company concession. Shirts, trousers, underwear, socks, and shoes are available at the Commissary. Items now rationed in the U. S. such as shoes are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, however. Dress clothes, usually white linen or Palm Beach suits, can be purchased in the outside stores. Most

office employees wear white linen trousers at work, while men in the Plant usually wear khaki. Restricted buying and limited choice of certain items is now the accepted situation here as it is in the States.

Incoming mail is handled by the Company Postoffice, which receives it direct from the Government Postoffice for distribution to employees. You will have a numbered box, and you are urged to advise regular correspondents of this number, in order to facilitate distribution. The correct address is "(your name) in care of Lago Oil & Transport Co., Ltd., Aruba, N. W. I." The Company Postoffice also sells stamps, and mails letters or papers and parcels for employees.

In normal times airmail may travel to or from the United States in from four to seven days, depending on distance. Under present conditions the average time for airmail is from seven to ten days. Letters sent by regular mail (or "boat mail") may take anywhere from ten days to four or five weeks, depending on shipping connections.

The standard of exchange used in Aruba is the Curacao guilder, shown in writing as "Fls. 3.20" (from the equivalent but less commonly used term "florin"). The cash that employees draw in Aruba for local expenses is paid in guilders. A recent regulation makes it illegal to possess or circulate U. S. paper money.



A view including several of the eight Bachelor Quarters



The Dining Hall

The rate of exchange is approximately 1.88 guilders to the dollar, making a guilder worth about 53 to 54 cents U. S. currency.

The non-denominational church occupies a place of importance in community life. The church building, of coral and stucco, was built by the Company in 1939, and in 1940 a Hammond electric organ, purchased with money derived from various benefits, was added to the facilities. A minister is maintained by the Lago Community Church Association. In addition to regular church services,



The Women's Dormitory

Sunday school classes are held, with church members as teachers, and the Men's Forum and Women's Bible Class meet weekly. An active Women's Guild is affiliated with the Church.

The nearest Catholic church is in San Nicolas, about ten minutes driving time from the Colony.

You Will Find "Things to Do"

The Esso Club is the community center for foreign staff employees. The original building, which was constructed late in 1929, was destroyed by fire in June, 1942, and the Club now operates in temporary quarters. These, however, provide most of the essential facilities found in the earlier building.

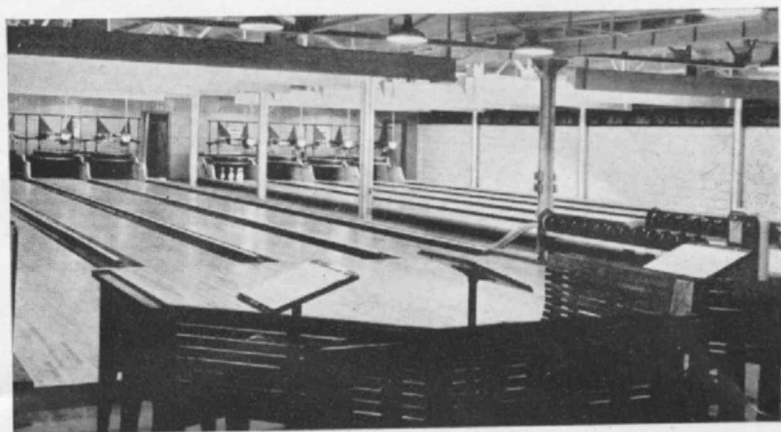
Motion pictures, presented several times weekly, are one of the chief sources of entertainment, and there are frequent dances. The Club's rental library contains over 2,000 volumes. (A magazine stand handling several hundred publications is located near the Postoffice.) There are also a cigar stand, barber shop, soda fountain, card room, bar, lounges, and large automatic phonograph with a regular supply of new records. Frequent card parties, beano parties, and other group entertainments are arranged. All purchases are made with Club coupons, which can be secured for cash or on credit.

The Club is run by a foreign staff manager, in collaboration with a committee elected by the employees, which acts as a governing board. Any profits are used for additional equipment, expanded services, or maintaining various employee activities, chiefly in connection with sports.

Various organizations active in the Colony include the American Legion, Engineers' Club, Women's Club and Women's Guild, and Boy and Girl Scout troops, the latter two being sponsored and directed by employees.

The most popular entertainment is bowling, for which eight alleys are provided, and competition is keen in inter-department leagues. Baseball, softball, and basketball tournaments are held each year. There are four paved tennis courts and two handball courts. A nine-hole golf course, built by the Company, provides year-round golf. It is operated by the Aruba Golf Club, an employees' organization, which organizes a dozen tournaments each year. A large clubhouse with bar, lounges, and locker rooms adjoins the course.

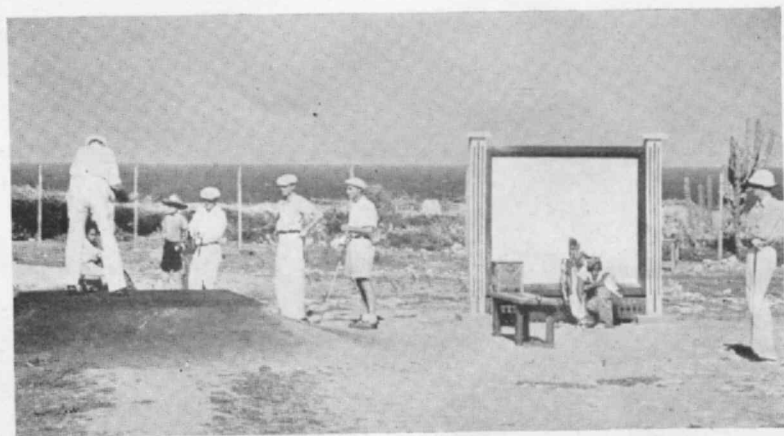
Swimming is an all-year-round amusement, with the temperature the same in December as in June. Two sheltered lagoons



Bowling alleys at the Esso Club

within walking distance of the Colony are available, one with diving facilities. Surf-bathing and surf-fishing are to be found within a mile of the Colony, on the north or windward shore of the island where there is no reef. A good road leads to this beach.

The largest of the two lagoons fronting the Colony is also used by the Yacht Club, which holds frequent series of races using "Snipe" class sailboats. Some employees own seaworthy power boats, for fishing outside the reef.



Sand "greens" on Aruba's excellent course offer a new challenge to the golfer from the States

There is no lack of "things to do" in Aruba, and employees find it easy to keep their leisure time filled.

Most employees have radios, which operate on 110 volts, 60 cycle, A.C. current. (The current is "frequency-controlled," permitting the use of electric clocks.) Only short wave or combination long-and-short wave sets are used, since long-wave reception is undependable. However, the dozen short wave stations now operating in the United States carry practically all of the important programs.

Since radios have been brought into the Colony for many years, second-hand sets are frequently advertised for sale in a local newspaper. Several radio mechanics are available for keeping sets in working condition.

Probably 90 per cent of the foreign staff employees operate automobiles, though this number will naturally decrease gradually because of the shortage of tires. While no cars are now being imported, second-hand ones still can be purchased.

Cars driven outside the Company concession are required to have Government license plates, which cost about \$25 per year. Anyone operating a car outside the concession must also have a Government driver's license, for which the initial charge is Fls. 15, renewable every two years for Fls. 1. The Watching department issues "Esso" license plates without charge for cars operated only within the concession.



Water all around, so sailing is popular



ARUBA

In taking a job with a company in the United States, you would need be concerned only with the conditions of your employment, and with general information about the company for which you would work. Whether it were located in Massachusetts, Texas, or California, the communities would be similar in most respects, and would offer a scene and mode of life which would be more or less familiar. In accepting a job with Lago in Aruba, however, it is well also to know something of the small island on which you will live, since going to Aruba involves a radical change in environment.

1. War Conditions

Since February, 1942, the island of Aruba has maintained total blackout, a condition which will probably continue for the duration of the war. Most residents have equipped their living quarters with means of ventilation, while complying with the regulation on light visibility. Car owners are allowed only a small amount of light showing from headlights and taillights, necessitating extra caution on the part of both drivers and pedestrians.

Since Aruba is an Army base, movements in certain areas are restricted, particularly after dark.

Mail, photographs, and movie film are censored. The sole restrictions on photography are that no cameras may be taken into the Plant, and military or harbor installations may not be photographed.

Wartime currency regulations limit to Fls. 500 (about \$265) per adult the amount of cash, in either dollars or guilders, that may be taken out of the Curacao territory by travellers. (This concerns only cash; additional amounts may be taken out by check.) In the same manner, travellers entering the United States are prohibited to bring in more than \$50 in cash. Vacationists who leave Curacao territory and later return, may not bring into the territory more than Fls. 25 in Curacao currency.

An export license is required on checks sent to the United States by mail; this causes no inconvenience, however, since the Company cashier is empowered by the Government to issue such licenses for employees.

2. *Island Home*

The island to which you are going is a part of the Netherlands Kingdom. With the exception of an interlude of English rule from 1806 to 1815, the Territory of Curacao, of which Aruba is a part, has been under Netherlands rule for over 300 years. Prior to 1634 these islands were under the domination of Spain. •

The three islands of Curacao, Aruba, and Bonaire have a language called "Papiamentu" which is spoken nowhere else in the world. It is simple in construction and relatively limited in vocabulary. Spanish and Portuguese form its largest part; Dutch is an important ingredient, and in recent decades a limited amount of English has been absorbed. The English language is understood by nearly everyone in Aruba, and is the official language of the refinery.

Aruba, second in importance of the six Netherlands possessions in the West Indies, is located about 20 miles off the northern coast of South America. The closest point on the mainland is a peninsula jutting northward from the coast of Venezuela, which frequently can be seen from Aruba on clear days.

The island, which is approximately 19 miles long and five miles wide, is formed principally of granite, prehistoric volcanic lava, and white coral. The entire length of its leeward side is fringed with reefs, and adding to its tropical appearance (average mean



Picnics amid the palms, a favorite diversion on holidays



Drawing water from one of the government wells

temperature about 85°) are the many palm groves scattered over the west half of the island.

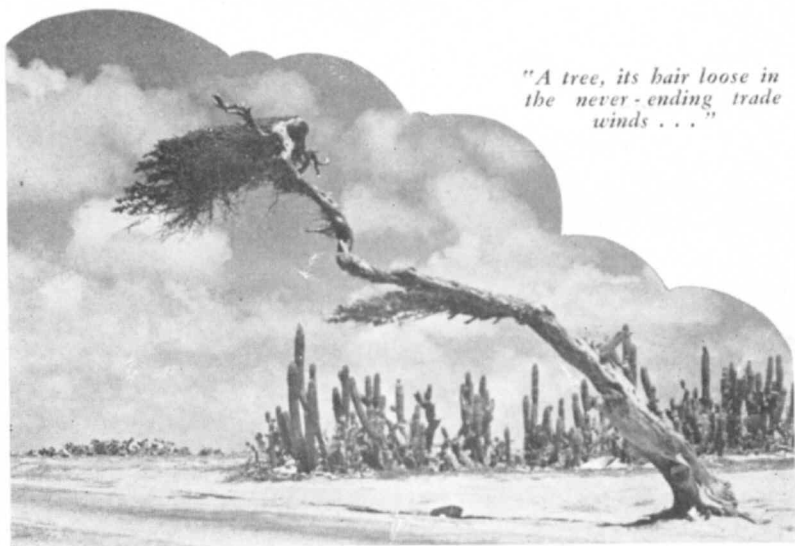
Trade winds blow steadily from the northeast throughout most of the year, and the east end of the island, where the Company's concession is located, has been largely swept clear of soil, exposing the coral and lava base. Thus aside from the hardy cactus, most of the natural vegetation that survives from one rainy season (October, November, and December) to the next is concentrated in the westward half. Much of the island is more or less flat, and not over 50 to 150 feet above the sea. A range of hills in the north central portion rises to a highest point of 560 feet above sea level. Most of the island is traversed by dirt roads, and a paved highway connects San Nicolas, adjoining the refinery, with the capital town of Oranjestad, about 14 miles away.

There are shops of many kinds in both San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Most of the goods on sale is of United States origin, with prices relatively higher because of import duties, ocean freight, and, at the present time, war risk insurance. There are also many stores that sell Central and South American curios and Oriental goods.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both gold and phosphate mining flourished in Aruba, but there has been no activity in either for over 30 years. Aside from the cultivation of aloes, which provide an important medicinal ingredient of which Aruba produces most of the world's total supply, there are no local industries. A majority of the island's 30,000 inhabitants now depend for their livelihood on the Lago oil refinery, either

through direct employment or through providing goods or services.

In the Lago refinery's "pioneering" days, it was customary for foreign staff employees to regard their jobs as "stop-gaps," temporary interludes of one or two periods of employment before returning to the United States. Over the last ten years, however, living and working conditions have become such that many employees have settled down with comparative permanence, and Aruba has become, not merely a place of temporary foreign service, but "home."



*"A tree, its hair loose in
the never-ending trade
winds . . ."*



