

# A RECORD SEASON IN CUBA

By R. HART PHILLIPS

HAVANA—Cuba's record spring tourist season has not been affected by the short-lived revolt that took place a fortnight ago at Matanzas, on the north coast sixty miles from here. Havana hotel managers are unanimous in reporting that no reservations have been canceled because of the uprising, and they confidently anticipate the best summer season in history. All say that the number of visitors during April far exceeded the total for April of last year.

The suspension of constitutional guarantees for a period of forty-five days is not expected to affect the visiting tourist. Military authorities have taken control of the island under this measure, but this has been done unobtrusively so far as visitors are concerned. The suspension of guarantees prohibits meetings, nullifies habeas corpus proceedings and seriously curtails the personal rights of citizens. The measure has also imposed censorship on the press and radio.

## Business as Usual

Cubans, while resenting any curtailment of their liberty, have long been accustomed to the "suspension of constitutional guarantees," which has been decreed repeatedly since the Thirties, and do not let it interfere with their daily lives. Business and pleasure go on as usual, which also means pleasure for the American visitor. Night clubs, casinos and tourist centers are operating undisturbed. Baseball, jai alai, the Spanish ball game, and horse racing at the Oriental Park Oval will continue.

The National Fishing Tournament, which got under way recently and in which eighty-four yachts are entered, will be held on week-ends during May. Also, the Hemingway Fishing Tournament, which yearly attracts many sportsmen from abroad, has just ended. Fishing is the favorite sport in Cuba during the summer. The black marlin begins to appear in

## Thriving Tourist Trade Unaffected by Brief Political Revolt

Cuban waters in April and May, and by June sportsmen are out looking for blue marlin.

Ernest Hemingway this year did not participate in the tournament which bears his name. He and Mrs. Hemingway and several expert fishermen are down at Cabo Blanco in Peru in search of a 1,500-pound marlin for the film version of "The Old Man and the Sea." Hemingway and others tried desperately and unsuccessfully to hook a marlin of the required proportions in Cuban waters. Then they decided to go to Peru. Meanwhile, Spencer Tracy, who is cast as the "Old Man," is here at Cojimar Bay, just across the harbor from Havana, locale of the novel, where filming is now in progress.

In general the majority of American tourists here did not know about the Matanzas incident, which occurred on Sunday, April 30, until it was over. In the past, some tourists, lacking any knowledge of the political background of the island, have showed lively curiosity in the spasmodic flare-ups of violence in Cuba, and have expressed satisfaction at the prospects of "seeing some excitement." This light view is resented by the Cubans, who see no "comic opera" touch in their internal strife, which so often results in many dead and wounded.

## Reports Delayed

Visitors in Havana two weeks ago did not hear about the brief bloody battle at Matanzas until the following day. On Saturday nights the Cuban press customarily begins a thirty-six-hour holiday. Under the regulations, radio stations are prohibited from broadcasting any news during the Sabbath, which is literally a day of rest. Therefore, news of the abortive revolt was late in reaching most visitors.

Only a few tourists in mid-

town Havana saw the sandbag barricades hurriedly erected at noon Sunday around the Presidential Palace and manned with machinegun crews, or noticed traffic being diverted from the Palace and policemen armed with rifles mounting guard. These preparations were carried out quietly and with rapidity.

Army, navy and police were ordered into quarters in Havana so quickly that by 2 that afternoon the only thing that might have attracted attention, on a drive down fashionable Fifth Avenue in the Miramar district or through the Vedado residential district, was the complete absence of blue uniformed police. Even at the tunnel under the Almendares River, which usually is guarded twenty-four hours daily, there was not a single policeman. In the heat of the early tropical afternoon, only a few automobiles circulated in the quiet streets so that it would have been impossible for a visitor to have suspected that military preparations were under way.

## News Reaches Varadero

At Varadero Beach, however, where the summer season for Cuban society will open in June, the news of the attack on the Matanzas army post spread rapidly. American tourists at the luxurious Varadero Internacional Hotel went to the roof in a useless attempt to see some evidence of the battle which was being fought twenty-two miles away.

The only American visitors who saw any sign of the disturbance were those who had left Havana Sunday morning to spend the day at Varadero. On their return to the capital, through Matanzas, late in the afternoon and at night, they encountered numerous road blocks manned by soldiers with machineguns who searched cars and demanded presentation of the visitors' tourist cards. It is also reported that a number of automobiles leaving Havana for Varadero that afternoon were turned back this side of Matanzas.