

CONEY NOT SCARED ABOUT THE POLICE

What with "Educational" Features and Injunctions It Expects to be Wide Open To-day.

DANCE HALLS IN DANGER

Bowery Resorts Likely to Feel the Hand of Bingham If They Don't Go Slow.

Coney Island closed up last night at midnight fairly well satisfied that, after all the alarms of last week, to-day will be very much like other Sundays in its experience. It had far more misgivings of the state of the weather than of the action of the police.

It formed that opinion partly from Commissioner Bingham's admission yesterday that, after all, there are legitimate and proper entertainments on the island, partly from the surprising results it obtained when it started to count up the "educational" exhibitions it possesses, and still more from the fact that Capt. Palmer had piled on his desk at the police station a heap of over forty injunctions forbidding him to interfere with as many shows without reference to their character.

Inspector Russell is expected to make a tour of the Island to-day and a body known as the Taxpayers' Protective Union also has decided to send a delegation around to the shows to see how the Mayor's orders work, but the resort proprietors would not say yesterday that they were particularly apprehensive of their visitations. Luna Park and Dreamland will be open as usual, and are unprotected by any injunctions. At the latter S. W. Gumpert, the general manager, said:

"We shall, of course, conform with any requests made by the police as we did last Sunday, and we do not believe that any difficulty will be raised."

Last Sunday the free vaudeville entertainment was omitted at the request of the authorities. Outside one of the shows the "barker" was got up in negro minstrel style.

He was withdrawn by request, but otherwise there was no interference with the park. Even the "Night in Paris" show went on unmolested, and of course such exhibitions as the Baby Incubators, the Filipino village, and the electric farm could take shelter under the educational defense. Perhaps in anticipation of this the young women cashiers have all been garbed in collegiate caps and gowns of maroon and blue.

Luna Park's Defense.

At Luna Park no statement was made, but it was pointed out that nothing but useful information could be derived from any of its shows with the exception of those devoted to rides of various sorts. At one corner of the park the public is instructed for a trifling fee in the story of the Merrimac and Monitor.

A little higher up the stirring incident of the Burning of the Prairie Belle and the heroism of Jim Bludsoe are reproduced. Jack Binns will initiate visitors into the mysteries of wireless telegraphy, and all these things seem to Coney Island eminently befitting a Sunday afternoon. For the rest, rides like the Mountain Torrent or the Dragon's Gorge are believed to be distinctly elevating.

The views of the average proprietor at Coney Island were expressed by George C. Tilyou of Steeplechase Park, who said:

"Of course we shall open to-morrow. The police have no right to come along and interfere with my business. They may arrest me if they like, if I break the law, but they cannot notify me to stop opening. I don't see, though, what they have to complain of here.

"We have millions of people coming here in the Summer and 25 per cent. of them would go to the saloons near home if they did not have this place. In the saloons they would spend all their money, and if they do spend some of it here their wives are with them and get the benefit and prevent them going too far."

Something was said to Mr. Tilyou about educational shows. He replied at once:

"Aren't we educational here, too? Look at those persons riding on our mechanical ponies. They go as fast as thirty miles an hour, quite as fast as most horses. A few times around and a man will know how to ride. Then on our dancing floor we always have a professor to teach those who don't know how to."

Mr. Tilyou pointed with pride to the easy chairs he has installed looking out over a garden in front of his main building.

Comfort for All Hands.

"The law says it allows entertainments on Sunday which give comfort. There's comfort for you and not a table near by to make a man order anything to drink. I might have let this land for cheap booths at very large rentals, but I preferred to leave it to give my patrons some grass and shrubs to look at comfortably. When we sell beer here I'm going to have the bar right away from the dancing hall, so that no one can say his daughter can't come here because she's obliged to mix with drinking men.

"I came to the Island twelve years ago with \$1,000 capital. I was burned out year before last, and have invested \$2,000,000 in this new building. I've done it by finding out that what the public want is clean amusement. Why, look at those pictures, "The Maiden's Prayer," "A Christmas Scene," and "Admiral Dewey." There's art for you. Not a suggestive one in the lot. I don't see what the police have against me."

Mr. Tilyou was shown Commissioner Bingham's declaration against touching "legitimate or proper exhibitions." It legitimized him, but he was much more pleased when a few minutes later he received from his lawyer an injunction signed by Justice Stapleton forbidding any attempt of the police to close him up.

It is generally conceded that the administration is aiming at some of the cheaper Bowery resorts, where painted women disport themselves on a stage while men sit and drink beer. The question of the license comes in here, as they are mostly fortified with seven-day liquor and exhibition licenses. It is among them that trouble is mostly likely to occur, and they form some of the least-desirable features of Coney Island.

But, like the rest of their colleagues, they contend that no one can say a word against them.

"We're a quiet family concert hall," said the owner of one of them yesterday, as fifteen short-skirted girls shivered on the stage while another croaked a song. "You'll see the women and the children come in here for a rest as well as the men, and there's nothing the police have against us."

Bingham's Statement.

According to a statement given out by Commissioner Bingham in differentiating between the educational and moral claims of the shows not protected by injunctions the police will have after all to fall back on their interpretations of the law, and

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there will be no wholesale shutting down of the island. He said:

"As regards Coney Island, there is not and there has not been any desire or attempt on the part of the Police Department to restrict legitimate or proper exhibitions or entertainments. It is believed that a very large part of the exhibitions provided on Coney Island are within the law. Gambling, disorderly places, low dives and drinking places are certainly not wanted by the community, nor are they necessary to the proper and legitimate entertainment of the public."

When he was asked about the proposal to shut up the dance halls on the stroke of midnight on Saturdays, he said:

"I'll let the boys and girls have a good time. After the clock has struck 12 we'll let those who are in the building finish, but we won't let any others in."

The Commissioner admitted the complications which might arise through the distinction between a six and a seven day license, but simply said that the police must be governed by the law. He also declared that the Bowery, although it is in a way private property, will be patrolled, as it is not private property in the full sense that Luna Park and Dreamland are. He also announced that he will be a good deal on the island himself this year, and that his Inspectors will report direct to him.

It fell to Little Tim Sullivan's lot yesterday morning, as Acting Mayor in the absence of Mr. McClellan at Princeton, to receive a deputation of agitated Coney Island showmen at the City Hall. Among those who sought him was Petros D. Econopoull, a Greek, who says he employs 300 men in boating pavilions, candy stands, moving picture shows, and so on. He argued that you couldn't call his ventures unnecessary labor on Sunday, for without Sunday toil his men could not make a living.

Not a "Scab" Mayor.

All the deputation was slow in arriving, and "Little Tim" sent out word that 12 o'clock was drawing near, and he must be going.

"I'm no scab Mayor," he said. "I don't work after hours."

However, none but Henry Bruml would face the majesty of the Mayor's room, and he, as the representative of several novelty stands on the island, began: "We've no kick against your administration—"

"Quit that," interrupted his Acting Honor, "I'm not the McClellan administration."

"Little Tim" explained that were he the real Mayor he would "do something for you people" right away. He went on:

"The Mayor is determined to enforce the law as it stands. In the long run it will be the best thing for you. If the police are unjust there is not a Judge who will not grant you an injunction. Then you can get the law repealed."

In Coler's Bulletin yesterday there appeared an editorial on the Coney Island matter, which was afterward backed up by a statement given out by Borough President Coler. The Bulletin's comment began:

"It would seem as if the Administration were given over to madness in its closing days. Its silly edicts have held up subways and other improvements, have paralyzed the building industry, and now it seeks by a sham and hypocritical puritanism to make Coney Island a place of mourning instead of a place of enjoyment on the one holiday of the working people of the city.

"It matters not that the island has improved in its moral tone; that its entertainment devices are run in a safe manner; that the Coney Island trip is the weekly pleasure of millions.

"The whim of the administration outweighs all this. The rage for interference must run its course. Coney Island must be held down."

In his statement President Coler points out that though Borough President he has nothing to do with the Mayor's policy toward the island.

Fearing that Fort George might suffer in the crusade against Coney Island, Louis Wendel yesterday obtained from Justice Stapleton an injunction protecting his amusement enterprises. Midland Beach, on Staten Island, is not yet open for the season, and is not therefore affected. At South Beach there is only one concert hall, and Police Captain Walling expects no trouble with it. He said yesterday that he will not allow any carousels or roller coaster places to operate to-day.