

of many contrasts

everything, from high mountains and jungles to deserts, and in places like Peru and Bolivia you can see all three in the space of twenty-four hours' travel. It's a very beautiful, undeveloped continent."

Ronneseth says one of the problems with travel in South America is the constant change in governments, which produces subsequent changes in visa restrictions, boarding permits, border closures and so on. As well, there's the care and attention you have to pay when buying food in the streets or drinking water (always sterilized - by boiling or with tablets).

Argentina, according to Ronneseth, is the most civilized country in South America but much of the continent is more civilized than most Canadians imagine.

"For example," he says, "there is good transportation in South America. You can buy a southern version of 'Ameripass' and travel buses for 10,000 miles of road. Hitch-hiking is good - but the thing is that nobody is going anywhere. If you've got lots of time, it's fine - but it's slow.

"Train transportation is generally very good. But you can meet some unexpected difficulties when you ride the rails. Trains in Peru have oxygen and medical staff available to help passengers suffering from the altitude. The rail from Lima to Huancayo is the highest in the

world - up to 12,000 feet - and at that altitude the sun is hot and the air bitterly cold."

Ronneseth feels that travel in South America can be cheap - if a person uses public transport and sleeps in *pensiones* for a couple of dollars a night. And it can offer some fascinating adventure, as well.

"You can still take barges down the Amazon," he says, "from Laticia, on the border of Peru, Columbia and Brazil right up to the mouth 2000 miles away. You sleep in a raft on the deck, dip a can in the river, brush your teeth and then pass the can. You've got to go early to the loo because there's thirty others waiting."

Etcetera. Floating past some of the most breath-taking scenery in the world. Buying fish, pig or fowl from passing canoes and slaughtering them right on board. Cost? Forty of fifty dollars.

If you feel like taking in that sort of action, drop by Westcan travel in HUB and pick up a copy of South America Survival. It's in two volumes (\$1.50 each) and outlines bus routes, train and plane connections, visa requirements, insects to watch out for (such as spiders on the Bolivian buses,) cheap accommodation, local foods and places to eat, cheap sights to see and just about everything else you might want to know. While you're at it, talk to Ronneseth; he might offer something valuable. *by Kevin Gillese*

exposed in BC paper

"I was lucky - I ran into all sorts of nice people. But some of the other kids have been really hurt. So, I'd like to offer some pointers to other young people travelling abroad:

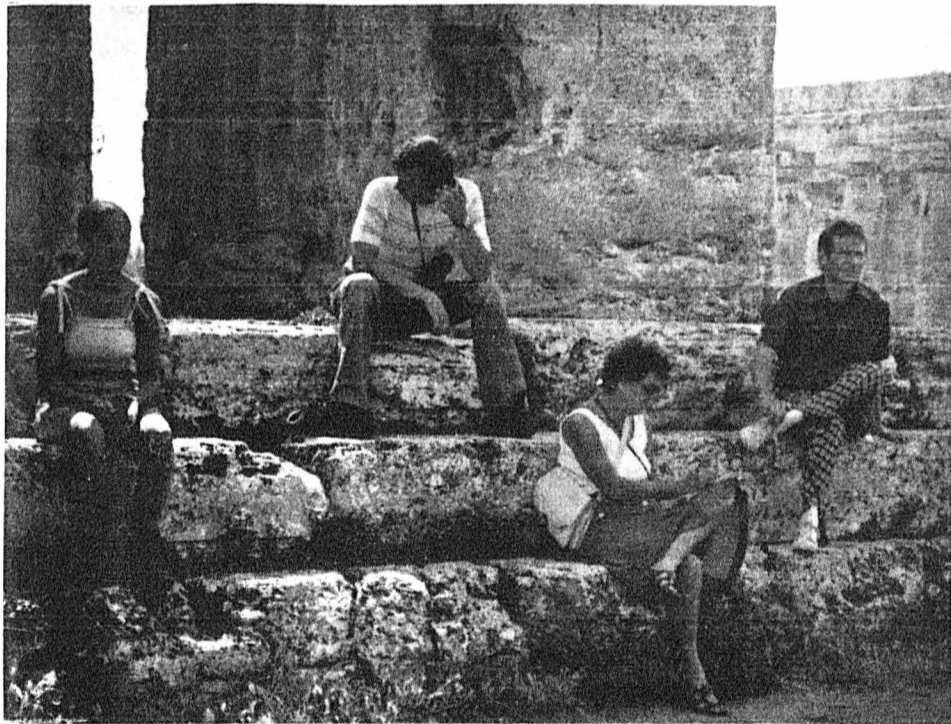
"Investigate any organization you have dealings with. Don't let them be your sole source of information (write the Canadian Embassy and a better business bureau);

"Be very careful where and what you

sign; make sure you have their official signature.

"Hang on to your hard-earned money; don't pay before the contract is fulfilled as stipulated;

"Don't be scared of Europe; it's an exciting place, full of wonderful people. But as anywhere, there are crooks ready to prey on supposedly "rich" Canadians. So, be one percent hard-core sophistication and 99 percent youthful innocence and enjoy yourself."

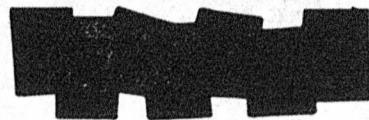


Doric temple at Mataponto attracts sightseers.



Gargoyles adorn European facades and fountains

Photos Bob Austin



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