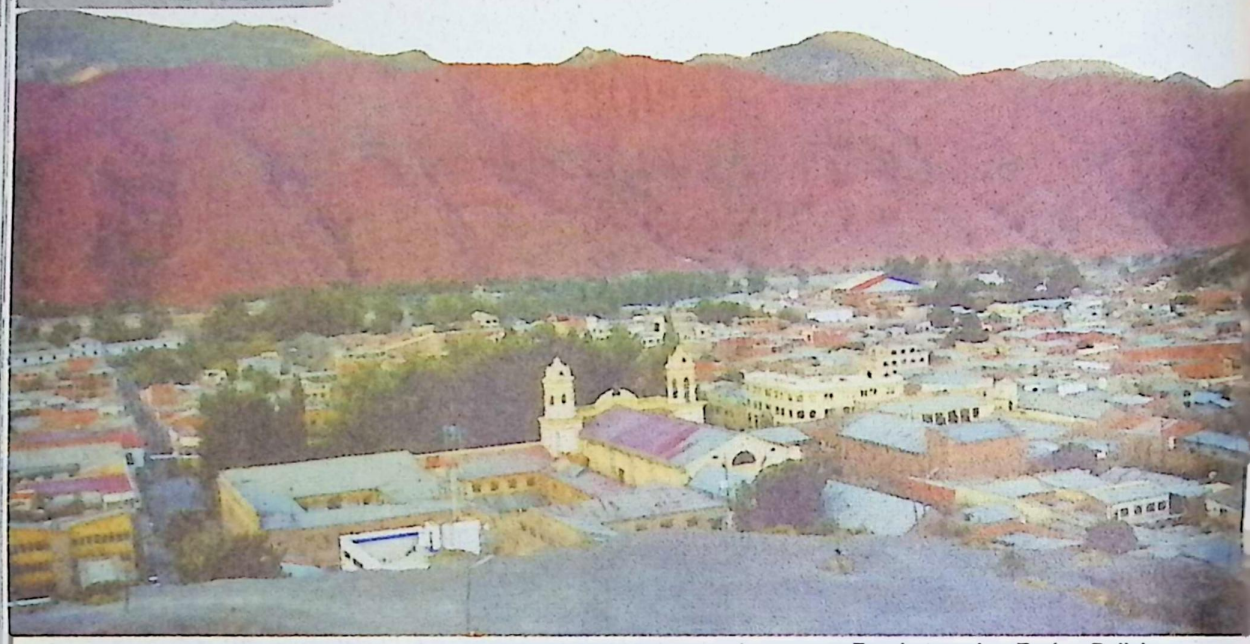


Evening reaches Tupiza, Bolivia.

Do Horses Bite?

ANDREW EAGLE

Tupiza, Bolivia

Shhh! Do you hear it? Barely audible? Wait... Yes, the thurram-thurram-thurram, that terrible sound, is growing, coming, gaining ground. Onto the horses! The thunder of hooves is ricocheting off the canyon walls. Lightning speed: they're coming to catch us; no time to lose!

Did you ever imagine how it would be, in the American Wild West, in the movies? I did. Robbing a bank or a stage coach, flying away on horseback in a hail of bullets, red-check handkerchief over the mouth, disappearing in a cloud of desert dust? And if the trail ever became too hot, if the sheriff was too close or the Pinkerton Detective Agency too diligent in their hunt for the stolen loot, for the thieves and the bounty for capture, one could always do as the infamous bank robbers Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid did in 1901, and escape to South America.

What better way to experience Tupiza, where Butch and Sundance finally met their ends, than to hire a horse and gallop like a train, fly like the wind, through a desert canyon, past a cactus or two? Thurram-thurram-thurram: that was the idea.

Helpful hint: of course it would be better to know beforehand how to ride a horse.



Butch Cassidy, the infamous American bank robber was probably killed near Tupiza in 1908.

Nong Khai, Thailand

It was just yesterday, several years later, I was remembering that afternoon on horseback, how it had been. It was a world away from Bolivia, with the steamy, monsoon Mekong idling by, beyond the cabana. Tourists gathered to chat and sip on