

ing all the nations here represented to enter into a solemn treaty having the binding force of an international compact?

Now I would ask you, gentlemen, when have the negotiations of a treaty been considered a fit subject for publicity? Does not every government, on the contrary, endeavor to surround with the strictest secrecy the trend of its diplomatic negotiations in such matters? Is a government on that account considered to be acting slightly to the opinion of the nation which it represents and of whose interests it is the guardian? Certainly not. All that it does is to preserve by means of secrecy a freedom of action which otherwise it would lose. And so, gentlemen, when we reach such subjects, each one of you, I am sure, will endeavor to guard and protect the interests of your several governments, from which you have received the highly honorable mission of representatives acting thus with sincere patriotism, while also considering the common interests of this hemisphere and of humanity. But are we, on that account, to admit our several peoples to our deliberations, by allowing them to bring to bear on us the almost irresistible influence of the press? For, let us not deceive ourselves, Messrs. Delegates; once having admitted the press within this Hall, during the discussion of matters which in their essence are diplomatic, we must either make up our minds to dispose of all such matters in a single session, or, if not, to come hither every succeeding session, under the influence, (perhaps unperceived by ourselves but not on that account less real) of the opinions expressed by the local press and the press of your respective countries, of which we shall learn by telegraph all the more quickly in proportion as the opinions propounded abroad are more radical and advanced.

In view of these considerations, the Mexican Delegation, I repeat, desired, through Art. 21, of its original project, to leave the Conference itself to determine when its sessions were to be public and when secret, while as a general rule it was provided that those sessions were to be simply private.

«Such being the situation, our Delegation, after giving its project publicity by circulating it in a printed form among the Delegates, invited them to confer privately without the formalities of a solemn session. The Conference is aware of the result of these collective deliberations, and the Mexican delegation can never feel sufficiently grateful to the Delegates of the other nations for the good will and spirit of concord with which they were pleased to cooperate in its labors.

«When we reached the question of publicity, which is the subject of this debate, many of the Delegates (I remember distinctly those of Brazil, Chili, Ecuador, Peru and Nicaragua) and not a few of the Mexican Delegates also, declared themselves in favor of allowing the representatives of the press to be present at the deliberations of the Conference. Someone made allusion to the dimensions of the Hall in which we are assembled and which will not accommodate more persons without a tax on its capacity. Then it was that the idea arose of empowering the President of the Conference to limit the number of press representatives to be admitted into the Hall, suggesting that the editors and correspondents of Mexican and foreign newspapers should designate some among their number to act for all.

«Others of the Delegates objected to that system

for reasons of some weight, the principal of which was that, if the number of press representatives were restricted, errors in facts or opinions might find their way into their reports and not be susceptible of easy rectification, as they would be if the newspapers represented were numerous and the reports of some could be set, so to speak, against those of others. In this way, one suggestion leading to another and one compromise to another, at the termination of a meeting which had lasted several hours, the fundamental points of the plan which took definite form in the project now before the meeting were agreed upon and the Mexican Delegation believed that it had the approval of all the Delegates who had taken part in the labor of its preparation.

«When, therefore, His Excellency, Sr. Alzamora, the worthy representative of Peru, towards whom I take pleasure in expressing my high respect, yesterday came out in favor of the unlimited admission of the press, invoking principles of liberty which none of us disown, for we are all the children of free nations, I must acknowledge that his action was a surprise to the Mexican Delegation and to myself in particular, for we had to confess that we had been mistaken in supposing that the Delegates, who had given us the invaluable aid of their experience and enlightenment, were of one mind with us as to the wording of the article in the form in which it was submitted to the Conference.

«Having made these explanations at length for which I must bespeak the patience of the meeting, it only remains for me to define, still more clearly, if possible, the attitude of the Delegation to which I have the honor to belong.

«We do not desire to exclude either the Mexican or the foreign press, whether it belong to the nations which have honored us with the presence of their Delegates in this conference or to any other nation. We do not desire to prevent the press from being acquainted day by day, nay minute by minute, if possible, with everything happening in this Hall, provided the absolute freedom of opinion of the Delegates, which we think ought to be protected and safeguarded in every way and to the fullest extent, be not thereby compromised and that publicity be no hindrance to our arriving at conclusions, to which all of us, with entire singleness and sincerity of purpose, aspire, and which, as I have already said, will inure to the welfare of our several countries, our continent and humanity in general.

«How are we to attain those ends, to which all of us who are here aspire? The Mexican Delegation has already had the honor of submitting a plan, which, after receiving the friendly advice of other Delegates, it considered most conducive to the ends in question. If the Conference, acting upon other opinions and with a wisdom in which we are lacking, sees fit to adopt other measures for assuring the independence of its members and the success of their deliberations, we will respectfully and cheerfully accept them.

«One word more before concluding, Messrs. Delegates. Let not the dimensions of the Hall where we are assembled exercise a decisive weight upon your opinions. If my country, with feelings of sincere hospitality, has placed it at your disposal, she did so because she thought it worthy of you and because she desired to preserve in it for ever the echo of your words. It is true, perhaps, that an ampler hall might

not afford you the same relative comforts as this. But in any event, it would not be impossible to find another place for the deliberations of this Assembly, capable of containing a much larger number of persons than the Delegates who are at this moment the esteemed guests of the Mexican nation. (Applause.)

*His Excellency Mr. Baez, Delegate from Paraguay.*—Mr. President: Yesterday I was deprived of the pleasure of attending the session of the Conference, owing to the fact that I was present at an official ceremony which took place in the National Palace, and trust that this Honorable Assembly will excuse me.

Furthermore, I ought to state, that I was likewise deprived of attendance at the private conference to which the Honorable Delegation of Mexico invited me for the purpose of studying the articles of the Regulations, because I was a member of a special committee presided over by the Honorable Mr. Davis; but if I have experienced this loss in not having been able to assist at those debates, relative to the reglamentary article in question, in turn I feel amply repaid by having heard the eloquent address by Mr. Macedo, member of the Mexican Delegation, in regard to the admission of the press.

I must confess, that I have been fairly overpowered by the solidity of his arguments, and have been dazzled by the brilliancy and eloquence of his imagery and of his conceptions, by the elevation of his ideas, by the wisdom and depth of the sentiments that he has expressed in his address, by the arguments and the ideas, that are in favor of the article proposed by the Mexican Delegation. I render the most fervent homage to ideas so elevated, and I feel it a duty, from motives of urbanity and patriotism, to render public testimony of respect and admiration to that gentleman, as well as to the ideas of the other Honorable Delegates expressed at the former session.

I beg also to be allowed to express a public avowal of my high consideration for the Press, so far as the Delegation of Paraguay is concerned, which I have the honor to represent at this Conference.

It is not my intention to make an address nor to laud the Press, which has been sufficiently lauded, not only in this Congress, but by philosophers, journalists, orators and all others who have had occasion to speak in regard to this most important factor, from the elevated ideas of Camille Desmoulins to the grand and eloquent speeches of Emilio Castelar.

It would seem that the Honorable Mr. Macedo has sought to embody all the elevated ideas and to attain to the height of sentiments that have ever been expressed in this regard, in the delivery of his eloquent discourse.

I consider the Press as an institution forming part of the organism of republican nationalities. I have read many treatises on political philosophy, I am acquainted with authors, both American and European; I have found the greatest delight in reading the works of Lieber and Grimke; and in all these treatises on political philosophy, I have found that the Press is an institution like that of the jury, of *habeas corpus*, of suffrage and of all those institutions which we call free, and which we have adopted for the welfare of our respective Republics.

Therefore, when speaking of the Press, we ought not to consider it of lesser importance than any of the said institutions, and in point of fact, Mr. President, this Conference has accorded to it all the importance

that it merits; the tribute of consideration, that in reality should be rendered, has been bestowed upon it on the part of all the Delegates who have spoken in this debate.

I desired to express these ideas, not for the purpose of making an address, but simply in support of the vote that I am to cast in the matter to be decided here.

Therefore, considering that in my country there are no laws against the Press, considering that in many States of the American Union there exist laws in favor of the Press, and, finally, that it forms a part of our political and republican organism, I am going to cast my vote, with due respect to all ideas in favor of the proposition presented by the Mexican Delegation, I second the motion made by the Honorable Mr. Alzamora, that all the members of the Press be admitted, without restrictions or conditions of any kind.

The sessions of the Conference ought to be public and known to all the world; the Conference is not an aulic council, where important matters are treated in secret. Principles of the highest order are to be discussed, questions that interest the whole civilized world. I would like all the world to be present here, in order to take note of everything we do in this Assembly, of even the slightest ideas here expressed, and I, for my part, will often express trivial ones.

I would be pleased, in case, at any time I should vacillate, if I should be perplexed just how to cast a vote, to have the Press goad me, to have the Press give me proper enthusiasm. I need its censures. I do not want its eulogies, for I am very modest and the representative of a modest country; but I do need the castigation of its censure to urge me on to express ideas from a noble and elevated point of view, for these are the sentiments that I bring in the name of my country.

Having made these explanations, I beg the Conference to excuse me for having taken up so much of its valuable time.

*His Excellency Mr. Matte, Delegate from Chili.*—After the eloquent address that the Conference has just listened to from the lips of the distinguished Mr. Macedo, an address whose courteous phrases in naught contradict the delicacy with which we have been received and treated from the moment that we first trod the hospitable soil of Mexico, an address whose elegant diction may be compared to a literary essay, that for its ideas, places Mr. Macedo on the high plane of the statesman, and which for its truth, merits being termed a veritable mirror reflecting all that has occurred in private and in public at this Conference, I would have nothing to add, Mr. President, if it were not for the fact that I believe that within the ample propositions presented by the Mexican Delegation, there is room for the views that the Chilean Delegation has maintained at the private sessions, and which it has continued to maintain at the public ones as well.

These propositions, Mr. President, have two objects in view; the first is, that the deliberations of this Conference may reach the very confines of the earth, with the most absolute truth and exactness; second, that the Press may have free access to this Assembly, so that it may in turn transmit its impressions or reflect what has occurred in this Conference in the form it may deem proper.

Mr. Macedo in his notable address has stated the difficulties that would be incurred by the lack of



publicity, and, on the other hand the difficulties which might ensue upon the admission of the Press. We have maintained from the first moment, that not only a single report but two in fact should be given, the report of the Press and the report of the officers of this Conference so that the defects of the former may be corrected by the official statement of the latter.

For this reason, Mr. President, at the private session to which we have had the honor of being called by the distinguished Mexican Delegation, we had occasion to sustain the two kinds of publicity; one through the medium of the Chair, which is absolutely indispensable, and the other by means of the admission of the representatives of the Press. The first method is not of difficult execution, for a competent official can prepare, from the commencement of our deliberations a brief summary, that may be amended by the Delegates, according to the gravity of the themes treated, and in conformity with the importance of the ideas, and five minutes after the session, publicity may be given to the said summary, as a faithful, exact and official statement of what has occurred, in such manner that it shall operate as a corrective for the errors of the Press, whether the same shall arise from evil intention or misconception.

For these reasons, Mr. President, being in accord with the various propositions sustained by the greater portion of the Honorable orators who have taken part in this debate, permit me to add four words to the draft adopted by the Mexican Delegation, to wit: ". . . and the Representatives of the Press in the number and with the representation that may be determined by the President."

I believe, Mr. President, that this form embraces all the propositions that have been expressed in the Conference; I think that it covers the proposition of the Honorable Mr. Alzamora, and that of the Honorable Mr. Carbo, and above all the correctness and loyalty, for which we all ought to strive.

For these reasons, Mr. President, in the notable address of Mr. Macedo, there may most fittingly be included the words that the Chilean Delegation has the honor to propose to the deliberation of the Assembly.

*His Excellency Mr. Alzamora, Delegate from Peru.*—Men are naught; ideas are everything. What does it matter whether it be one Delegation or another, whether it be one or the other of its members that may propose an idea or an addenda to such idea, if that idea is victorious? I wish my personality to remain concealed in this debate; what I do aspire to, is that the idea of the absolute publicity of our deliberations may triumph, and I rejoice to see that the Delegations from Ecuador, Chili and Paraguay are united with me, in this idea.

Then why has this debate taken place, if we are all in accord, and all are united in an idea that shall reflect upon this Congress a light which may be envied by many others and a result, that none in future shall excel? I cannot explain to myself all that has passed. For my part I can only say that I have not intended to attribute to myself any merit nor any glory.

The Honorable Mr. Macedo, in his magnificent address which I will not attempt again to eulogize, for fear it might be distasteful to his modesty, has given in a certain way the key of all that has passed in the Committee, and the basis for a veritable

explanation of this debate, that should not have taken place.

The first day, all, and especially the Chilean Delegation, I take pleasure in acknowledging it, before the Peruvian Delegation, in the same order in which the Honorable Mr. Macedo has placed them, maintained that the Press ought to have access to the Hall. We were all in accord, and I thought that the idea had prevailed; but the debate lasted two days, and when on the second day, I thought it had triumphed, I found that they had taken in their sails, and that there was a resolution not to admit the Press to the Hall of Sessions.

Now then: if the members of the Chilean Delegation felt a commotion when they saw that someone was advancing to propose this idea, if they had thought that it was of immense importance, how was I to believe that after a lapse of twenty-four hours, the idea before held by the Committee was no longer so important, so deeply rooted, so incontrovertible? From that moment I considered all debate useless, and without receding from my position I abandoned the idea.

That I was always in favor of that idea, the Honorable Mr. Macedo has said, and with him all the other members of the Mexican Commission, Mr. de la Barra, Mr. Pineda, the President of the Assembly himself. I voiced those ideas from the beginning, in the firmest, most positive manner.

The Committee believed nevertheless that I had accepted its amendment, but not one of the gentlemen whom I have named, none of those who were there, can cite one word of mine that might signify assent.

Of course, being on a Committee and convinced as I was, that there existed a certain idea, which I now acknowledge did not exist, I could not speak as freely nor in the same manner as if one were before an Assembly: that is a question of the inspiration of the moment, of one's nervous temperament.

I, owing to the change of opinion of all the gentlemen who had been with me at first, became vexed, and this is the secret of my conduct; that vexation was due to the idea that my Honorable Colleagues were acting with a deliberate design.

I see, however, that it was not so, and beg a thousand pardons, because I was mistaken; I see that they did not follow a deliberate purpose, since these gentlemen again maintain the idea which they upheld at the beginning. I have, perhaps, been in error, but the facts were as I have stated.

Notwithstanding, what does all this signify? What does it matter that there may have been this vacillation within the Committee, among the Delegates who were there? What does it matter that I myself may have felt for a moment some vacillation, that I might not have contradicted vigorously the opinions of the Honorable Delegates who were there? Could I sacrifice an idea like this, which appears today to have the assent of all the Delegations who seemed to oppose it? Could I sacrifice, I say, this idea, because in the Commission no vigorous defense of it had been made? It appears to me that this would not be a sufficient reason.

The only thing I regret in this matter is that the gentlemen who have brought about this debate should not have given credit to my assertion, for there is a very great difference between affirming a positive fact and denying it. When I affirmed that I had not given my vote in the Committee I hoped

that I would be believed, in the same manner as I admitted the corrections of the Honorable Delegate Mr. Walker Martínez. It is a matter of positive facts, and no one should deny them. I do not know what reasons exist that my assertions should not prevail. Is it because it has been thought that I wanted to exclusively maintain this idea?

Not at all. If it is proved that all entertained it, that all adopted it in various forms, and that I have done nothing more than to seize it at an opportune moment, I will not in any way attribute it to myself: the idea and the honor belong to the Conference. So true is this, that in fact there are only differences in detail, for we have all taken a step,—that of unanimously admitting the publicity. It is merely a question of form, so that I have no reason, neither has the Peruvian Delegation, to attribute to ourselves any merit in the matter; for if any merit there is, it must be accorded to the Conference.

These explanations having been made, which I have thought indispensable in order to dispel any idea of exclusiveness that might be attributed to me, I will now venture to oppose an argument presented in the address of the Honorable Mr. Macedo that might exert some influence on the minds of the Honorable Delegates, as regards the admission of the Press into this Hall, that is, relative to the treaties that may be formed here.

Mr. Macedo states that treaties are diplomatic acts, and that diplomatic acts should be private. Nevertheless, treaties, diplomatic acts from government to government, lose that character when they are treaties that must be discussed in an International Conference of a whole Continent. Treaties are diplomatic acts that are subject to secrecy, when they stipulate certain advantages for the contracting parties to the exclusion of those, not parties to the contract; but the treaties that we are to discuss are not of that character, and, consequently, the sole basis for the argument of Mr. Macedo disappears.

With regard to the proposition suggested by Mr. Matte, it does not differ from the Peruvian proposition; it merely adds a clause that constitutes a veritable amendment, and this tends to prove, once more, that there was no perfect accord between the members of the Delegations in treating this matter, because there existed different views and different intents.

But let us turn over, once for all, that disagreeable page; let us all rejoice that we are in accord on the fundamental idea, and let us try to give it an efficient and satisfactory form.

*His Excellency Mr. Lazo Arriaga, Delegate from Guatemala.*—I do not wish to take part in this debate, Mr. President, except to ask in the name of the Delegation of Guatemala, that as an act of justice to this Conference, and of justice also to the Honorable Mexican Delegation, orders be given for the immediate publication of the magnificent address of His Excellency Mr. Macedo. I believe that it is no secret that it is the intention of the Secretary to give publicity to the speeches delivered here in the Journal of our Debates; but comments have already been made regarding what is discussed here, unfavorable comments, which will be made in the Press of all countries, and to prevent them, it seems to me urgent that the attitude of the Conference be made known, and that attitude is admirably defined in the address of the Honorable Mr. Macedo.

This is the suggestion of the Delegation of Guatemala, Mr. President.

*His Excellency Mr. Walker Martínez, Delegate from Chili.*—I wish to add, Mr. President, a few words. It seems to me that the debate has been too prolonged and perhaps it is unnecessary to still further prolong it; but I would like in my turn, to establish certain facts, since it is a question in this debate of doing away with responsibilities.

There has not really been a question to divide us; there has been, in form, some divergence of opinion. The facts, gentlemen, will be incontrovertibly established through the assertions made by the different Delegations, and by the well authorized affirmations of the Honorable Mexican Delegation. The question, I say, has been one of form only, for by debating amicably the provisions of the Regulations, in private, we arrived at a unanimous decision, and we all accept the proposition that the Press ought to be represented in this Assembly.

What then was the question? Not to discuss the principle nor to take a step backward. It was agreed, gentlemen, at one time, that the Press should be admitted, at the suggestion, not of the Delegation of Chili, nor of the Delegation of Peru, but at the suggestion of the Delegation of Brazil; Brazil was the first to make that proposition, and we all agreed to this principle and unanimously recognized it. Afterwards we discussed the form in which the Press should be admitted to our sessions. We discussed amicably, gentlemen; we made observations quietly and without formality; some of us took note of the remarks of the others, but without giving to them a form of a speech. Consequently, we were all agreed in establishing a slight restriction upon the right of the Press to enter this Hall.

Now, gentlemen, why have we accepted that restriction? Because it ordinarily happens in all assemblies, that the members make, at a given moment, reciprocal concessions to arrive at an unanimous agreement. We all agreed to the proposition prepared by the Mexican Delegation, and accepted it. But, in reality, was there any retraction of principles? I trust the Honorable Delegate from Peru will permit me to tell him that his recollection is at fault; permit me to remind him, moreover, that if I wished to exercise the right of reprisal, I could prove that the Honorable gentleman is absolutely mistaken, by simply recalling the fact to the Assembly that the discussion referred to by His Excellency did not last two days; Friday the session was suspended, and Saturday we met twice on the same day to take up the question; so there was no proposition whatever from Chili to elude the representation of the Press in the Conference, and much less that the Delegation had retracted twenty-four hours later.

In the speech just delivered, it appears that there where principles maintained by the representatives of the various countries and retracted later on; but the incontrovertible truth is that the representatives of all the peoples of America at present in this Hall were as one holding that there should be light, that it should be spread over the whole Continent, that it should be diffused by all the wires of telegraphic lines, in order to communicate to everybody, the American public opinion, proclaimed in the face of the entire world. This was the principle that we all maintained; but we also courteously and kindly accepted the compromise to limit in a certain way the