

ernor Louis Pinto Souza, in the year 1772, ordered that a freight vessel of six oars on each side, sail over it communicating the Equinoctial Sea with the 36° parallel South latitude by a canal of 1,500 leagues formed by nature.»

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Alcides d'Orbigny explored, at the beginning of the XIX century, the bed of the River Plata, and the upper part of the tributaries that flow into the Amazon on its right bank. D'Orbigny wrote a work on his journeys which can be considered as a standard. In it he describes the course of the rivers on which he sailed, and he traces, in precise terms, the project of connecting the Plata and the Amazon. He says and follows:

«By the Beni River and at the foot of the mountains, the rich products of the Provinces of Apolobamba, of Muñecas, of La Paz de Yuncas and of Sicasitas; can be received and thus quinine and other products of the mountain range can be easily loaded on this river for transportation to Europe, thus economizing hundreds of leagues of overland transportation. La Paz and other cities of the centre of Bolivia will then be, by direct communication, nearer France than Chili.»

«Going up the River Ytinés, or Guaporé, Chiquitos can be reached by means of the River Verde, the River Blanco or San Miguel, thus all the products of the vast Province can be utilized.»

«Going up the River Barbados one can arrive further down than Matto Grosso. The latter tributaries of the Amazon, uniting, so to speak, at this point, with the first affluents of the La Plata, making it possible, during the rainy season, to cross in small craft from one source to the other: and a canal of 4,800 meters, dug out in a marsh, will be sufficient to complete a natural way, which commencing at the mouth of the Amazon terminates at the entrance of the River La Plata, flowing through 24 degrees of latitude or in the neighborhood of 1,200 leagues in length, and traversing all the centre of South America.»

«One can go in all directions by the River Mamoré; on one side, going up the River Grande, and the River Piray as far as Santa Cruz de la Sierra; on the other, by the Rivers Mamoré, Chimoré, Chaparé, Sécuri, Ysiboro, Tijamucha, Aperé, Yacuma, Yruyauí and their tributaries, along the base of the Eastern Cordillera, after passing Santa Cruz de la Sierra, following the country of the Yuracarés as far as 6° to the North East, and utilizing the numerous commercial products of Valle Grande, Mizque and Cochabamba.»

«In short, by means of the Rivers Beni, Guaporé and Mamoré, the products of Moxos can offer thousands of leagues of easy navigation for steamers of all sizes. It can be the centre of commercial operations on a vast scale, and destined to utilize all the riches today not made use of, of the centre of America.»

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«Thaddeus Haenke, the companion of Malaspina, also conceived the plan of the interior American navigation. Haenke travelled a great deal through the territory of Bolivia, and in his Report to the Gov-

ernor of Cochabamba, as well as in his writings on the subject, he earnestly recommended the importance of river communication, in order to utilize all the riches of the mountains. «Nature,» said Haenke, «seemed to have gathered in one great point all the wonders of the American Continent: here only are accumulated the immense mountain ridges of the chain of the Andes, here flows the Amazon and the Plata river; here are woods and boundless plains without equal in other countries. Nature itself seems, also, in the apparent chaos of all the things it has produced, to point out and show us the means most prompt and convenient for mutual communication between the vast provinces located in this great portion of the earth, and for the exploitation of their products so varied and abundant. The numerous large navigable rivers which rise in the mountains, are ways which nature itself has opened, breaking through mountain ridges and levelling impenetrable forests, thus facilitating, through the brush, an easy way for the transit of man.»

Haenke, who, of all ancient explorers, had perhaps more than others the genius of application and the altruistic spirit, not only divulged the problem of the interior American navigation but also offered his services to prove, by experiments, the feasibility of navigation from the centre of America to the Atlantic Ocean. Unfortunately, Haenke was not listened to, and, through his death, science was deprived of his theories, and thus the great ideal which he cherished in his latter days was not realized.

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Should more testimonies be desired, those of the distinguished mariners Jorge, Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, could also be invoked; they, likewise, studied the matter under consideration. The notable work entitled «Historical Description of a Voyage to South America» contains valuable information about the voyages and observations made by the most famous explorers who preceded them.

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The notice of the explorations made twenty-five years ago, by one of the Delegates to the Pan-American Conference, through true personal sacrifice and the loss of two brothers who accompanied him, awakened among his colleagues much interest for this class of research. Several of them induced him to present to the Congress a Memoir of his Voyage, illustrated with a map of the zones traversed; and the presentation of this work, the reading of which was listened to with enthusiasm, procured the appointment of a Committee entrusted with the consideration of the propositions submitted by General Reyes.

Even before the presentation of said Memoir, and surely through the impression it produced, several South American Delegates conceived the idea of taking advantage of the opportunity to renew the old desire of opening communication by water throughout the Continent.

Each of them possessed partial data, vague information and incomplete reminiscences regarding the rivers of their respective countries and the pos-

sibility of connecting them with those of the neighboring countries; and with all this data, although deficient, they believed that the idea was possible of realization. In carrying out the project, the Committee designated, in its turn, one of its members, in order that, by utilizing his application to geographical and historical studies, he might compare information and gather data.

The investigation produced the best results. After consulting the old books, it appeared that the actual notions on interior navigation, which have been converted almost into traditions and fables, were already known and had been discovered by eminent geographers since the colonial epoch.

The possibility of connecting the hydrographical river beds of the South, thus seemed so fully justified by so many and respected testimonies, that the only difficulty in the matter, considering the lack of time, has been the collection of documents and proofs.

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The Delegates from South American countries, whose territories are arriagated by navigable rivers, perceived, then, with great clearness, all the transcendental importance of the idea as first suggested. And, in order to take the first efficient steps toward its realization, they have suggested the meeting of a Geographical Congress.

It was noticed, however, with regret, that the absence of the Delegations from Brazil and Venezuela presented a serious inconvenience, since the outlets of the Amazon and the Orinoco Rivers are in those Republics.

The Delegations interested, however, believed, that a Convention, drafted under the terms as contained in the following project, would avoid the temporary difficulty alluded to.

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Such has been procedure followed in the annexed agreement. The Delegations which have agreed to it feel satisfied that the Geographical Congress of Rio Janeiro shall definitely solve the problem most transcendental for the civilization of America

## CONVENTION.

Whereas, in accordance with the «Exposé de motifs» and the Memorial presented to the International American Conference by General Rafael Reyes, descriptive of his explorations, the project of establishing communication between the three great hydrographic basins of South America, is shown to be practicable, thus affording a navigable route from the Orinoco to the Plata, through the heart of the Continent;

Whereas, the present lack of communications keeps an immense territory endowed with inexhaustible natural resources in a state of isolation from the industry and commerce of the World;

Whereas, among the problems studied by the International American Conference at Mexico, that of the interior communications of South America is of great moment to civilization;

Whereas, in order to pave the way for the realization of the project in question, it is advisable

that the nations bordering on the Orinoco, the Amazon, and the Plata, and their respective tributaries, should meet to discuss the best manner of realizing the project in question;

Whereas, the Republics of Brazil and Venezuela, in whose territories are situated the mouths of the Amazon and the Orinoco, are not now represented at this Conference and it therefore becomes necessary to consider the manner in which their cooperation is to be sought;

Therefore, the Signatory Nations have agreed on the following,

1. The holding of a Geographical Fluvial Conference in which the riparian nations will be represented and which will meet at the city of Rio de Janeiro within a year.

2. The Government of the Argentine Republic is entrusted with the mission of negotiating with the Government of Brazil with a view to securing in present and cooperation, which are necessary in order to hold said Conference.

3. Both Governments are hereby requested to secure the cooperation of the other riparian nations and to issue the necessary invitations.

4. The Conference shall work in accordance with the following program, excepting so far as it may be modified by the decisions of the Brazilian, Argentine and Venezuelan Governments:

a. To organize Geographical exploration Commissions.

b. To frame rules for said Commissions.

c. To make estimates of expenditure for the work to be done.

d. To fix the pro-rata contributions that each of the interested Governments is to make towards the expenses.

e. To organize an International Bureau whose mission shall be to compile, the data obtained as a result of the explorations and to submit to the interested Governments a general project for establishing communication between the hydrographical basins in questions.

f. To study all matters connected with the foregoing project, that may tend to a more rapid execution of the work, or that may bear on the measures to be taken by the interested Governments, either individually or collectively, to promote the welfare of those regions.

Mexico, January, 27th., 1902.—Lorenzo Anadon, Delegate of the Argentine Republic.—Fernando E. Guachalla, Delegate of Bolivia.—For Peru: Manuel Alvarez Calderon.—For Paraguay, Cecilio Baez.—For Colombia, The Delegate Rafael Reyes.—Francisco Cuestas, Delegate of Paraguay.—For Ecuador, L. F. Carbo.—The Secretary, V. M. Maurtua

Secretary Macedo.—The Chair rules that there be inserted in the act the Convention just read, with the statement of motives accompanying it, and that it be transmitted to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, for the purposes referred to by the Committee that presents them.

Secretary Macedo.—The said social committee named to study the work of His Excellency General Reyes, upon his geographical explorations in the regions of the Amazon, has presented its reports. Also several Delegates have delivered to the Secretary an additional resolution, relative to the same matter. The said report and additional resolution read as follows:

**REPORT of the special Committee appointed to consider the narrative of explorations presented by His Excellency the Delegate from Colombia, General Don Rafael Reyes.**

The Special Committee appointed to report on the Narrative of Explorations presented by His Excellency the Delegate from Colombia, General Rafael Reyes, has examined it with the most careful attention.

In that narrative, General Reyes mentions *in extenso*, among other interesting excursions undertaken by him and by his unfortunate brothers, Don Nestor and Don Enrique Reyes, that of the Putumayo River. We consider that this is without doubt, the most important and the one which has given immediate practical benefits.

Among the great South American arteries, the Putumayo, also called Yxa, is the principal one which flows into the Amazon below the confluence of the Yabari.

From the second-half of the eighteenth century the Putumayo had not been explored in all its extension and the same explorations carried on, in 1557 and later, by the famous and learned La Condamine, could not then contemplate, as was very natural, the problem of steam navigation.

Messrs. Reyes ascended that river, first in canoes, and subsequently took steamers along its whole course, turning over in that manner to civilization and to commerce a vast zone full of natural wealth of all classes. Had they done nothing else, that work by itself, would prove to be sufficient to entitle them to high encomium.

In addition to that enterprise, in which perished unfortunately, as a soldier of civilization, the aforesaid explorer Nestor Reyes, the brothers Reyes applied themselves to carry out other audacious expeditions in the basin of the Yabari, and along many tributaries of the Amazon, previously unknown. In that noble undertaking, Don Enrique Reyes lost also his life.

The investigations of the Reyes brothers extended, likewise, to the rivers which practically united the territories of Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Argentine. The paper presented by His Excellency the Delegate from Colombia has recalled the ancient desire to communicate the hydrographic dales of the Plata, of the Amazon, and of the Orinoco.

The spirit of geographical exploration having been lost in America after the colonial period, it cannot be doubted that the abnegation and activity of Messrs. Reyes are worthy of universal applause, more especially of that of the countries called upon to derive advantages through the better knowledge of their territories.

The Special Committee has, on the other hand, been informed that the knowledge of those regions shall be made known shortly, by means of a publication, on a large scale, which is to contain the most complete data of the fluvial regions of South America and of its natural products.

That publication will undoubtedly lend valuable services, and it will surely facilitate the efforts which

the South American Nations need make to establish interior navigation.

Therefore, the Special Committee, which has not studied nor does it pass on the exactness of some of the assertions which attribute to some countries the domain of certain rivers, present the following project of Resolution:

CONSIDERING that General Don Rafael Reyes and his brothers Enrique and Nestor, have made, at their own expense important explorations, tending to demonstrate the practicability of steam navigation on the Putumayo River and other affluents of the Amazon;

That in view of the data furnished by those explorations, the publication of an important work is being prepared relating to the Geography of South America, and specially to its hydrographic basins;

The International Conference resolves:

First. To give a vote of thanks to General Reyes for his explorations;

Second. To recommend to the Governments interested to protect and to make known in every possible manner the aforesaid geographical publication.

Mexico, January 28, 1902.—(Signed.) *Lorenzo Anadón.—L. F. Carbo.—W. I. Buchanan.—Juan Cuestas.—Fed. Henriquez i Carbajal.—Cecilio Baez.—Augusto Matte.—Fernando E. Guachalla.—Manuel Alvarez Calderon.—Alfredo Chavero.—V. M. Maurtua*, Secretary.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION.

The undersigned Delegates propose the following: 1st. The Delegates who accept this proposal shall dedicate to the explorers Nestor and Enrique Reyes a memorial tablet which is to be laid on their grave with the following inscription:

«The Delegates to the Second American Conference, assembled in Mexico, in 1901-902 to Nestor and Enrique Reyes, who died serving the civilization of America.»

2nd. That the Government of Colombia deign to accept the request to lay said tablet.

Mexico, January 30, 1902.—(Signed.) *J. Walker. M. W. I. Buchanan.—Augusto Matte.—Charles M. Pepper.—Fernando E. Guachalla.—Fed. Henriquez i Carbajal.—Volney W. Foster.—Alfredo Chavero.—Lorenzo Anadón.—Manuel Alvarez Calderon.—Cecilio Baez.—Francisco Orla.—J. N. Leger.—E. Pardo, Jr.—F. A. Reyes.—Juan Cuestas.—F. Davila.—J. B. Calvo.—L. F. Carbo.—Baltasar Estupinian.—Emilio Bello C.*

*Secretary Macedo.*—The Conference is asked if it will take into immediate consideration the report of the Committee and the additional resolution just read.

Having received affirmative reply, the Conference by unanimous vote, placed it under discussion, and without discussion and at motion of His Excellency Mr. Carbo, they were approved by acclamation.

*His Excellency General Reyes, Delegate from Colombia.*—«It has generally happened, Mr. President, that posthumous justice and honors have been done those who have served humanity; it is not so in the present case for, if my brothers and companions perished in the struggle, you honor them in

me, as President Diaz has done, as well as his Government, and the Geographical Society of this city. In their names, in that of my country, and in my own. I reiterate my gratitude to all.

«Permit me to cast a rapid glance over the immense Amazonian region, and the importance of the undertaking that has occupied this Conference.

«Great discoveries, in the sciences as in the arts, in Geographie, etc., etc., are not chance achievements; they are the results of continuous labor, of powerful effort, and respond to the urgent necessities of humanity, which constantly advances in search of perfection and truth. The discovery of America was in obedience to these universal laws.

«The whole Continent of Columbus is to-day, in its greater part, civilized, crossed by rails and telegraphs, dominated by steam and electricity. It may be said that civilization has attacked barbarity on the North and on the South, issuing from the temperate zones of both Hemispheres to conquer the torrid zone. So it is that we see humanity represented by all races and all tongues on the North, in number approaching a hundred million, including Canada, and by railways advancing to the tropics they have reached Central America; in this mass of humanity, the Britous predominate. To the South we see nations of great vigor and energy, which, like Mexico, have risen from their mediæval period, and entered resolutely into the era of progress and civilization; like Chili, and the Argentine Republic, which are advancing also towards the North, to consolidate with the first named. Those nations, united with their sisters of Spanish and Portuguese origin, represent more than fifty millions of the Iberic race. These, gentlemen, are the two great human races which on the North and on the South of our Continent, are striving for the ideals of justice, truth, and general welfare. We Latina, should endeavor to be the worthy descendants of those who in past centuries conquered and civilized the Saxons and the Germans.

«Between these two powerful human currents, is

encountered the immense region of the Amazon, furrowed by a network of fifteen thousand miles of rivers, navigable by steamers of from six to twenty feet draught; crowned with mountains that contain in their depths all minerals, and all precious stones; possessing all the climates of the various zones, from the cold of perpetual snow, to the heat of the ardent valleys. This prodigious region, in whose mountains, as in those of Peru and Colombia, are territories as salutary and as rich as Switzerland, and a hundred times more extensive, will be, as President Roosevelt has said, a new world that offers itself for the progress and well-being of humanity'.

«When this Conference took this matter up and resolved that a Congress of the river countries, assemble in Rio Janeiro, in conformity with the Convention signed by them, it did not busy itself with a chimera, but rather, according to my views, with the most important matter relating to our Continent.

«The time has come to study and to complete the means of communication between the three great hydrographical basins of South America: those of the Amazon, La Plata and the Orinoco.

«I cherish the conviction that Brazil will second with enthusiasm the labor begun in this Conference, and that she will call in Assembly, in her beautiful capital, within on year, perhaps of the countries joint-owners in the basins of the Amazon and the La Plata, to consider these great interests, which are also those of humanity.

«We trust that, when the next Conference Assembles, an account will be given of the practical results reached in this matter; and in that way the United States and Mexico, the initiators of the present one, and above all the latter, who has entertained us with so much splendor and cordiality, will have the satisfaction of seeing the fruits of one of their labors in the present Conference, and of realizing that they have colliaborated with highly eminent men, such as those who compose their Delegations.»