

times that one House of Congress is controlled by one party and the other House by the other party. For these reasons, and from the frequent rotation of political parties in the government of the United States, it is very difficult to bring to a successful termination any transaction of a complex character which requires complete continuity of views and effort on the part of all the branches of the government for any length of time.

Fears of the Spanish-American Nations.—It may be assumed that, as a general rule, the Latin-American nations, except, perhaps, the Central American and two or three of the South American States, looked with distrust on the meeting in Washington of an International American Conference, fearing that its object might be to secure the political and commercial ascendancy of the United States on this continent, to the disadvantage of those nations; but this distrust did not go so far as to make them refuse the invitation. Fortunately, when they were invited, there was no serious question pending between the Latin-American States which could prevent their acceptance, as was the case when a conference was suggested in 1881. The invitation was therefore accepted by all the American nations, with the single exception of San Domingo. The answer of the Dominican Government was a very courteous one, as it stated that that Government had agreed, in a treaty recently signed with the United States, upon arbitration, extradition, reciprocity, and the other subjects mentioned in the law convening the Conference; that these subjects had therefore been considered and decided in said treaty under the Dominican point of view, embracing stipulations which were already decided by the Dominican Government and could not be modified by the Conference, as it was not proper to modify treaty stipulations in an indirect manner by recommendations of the Conference; and therefore, as long as the pending treaty would not be acted upon by the United States, the Dominican Government felt that it could not send delegates to the Conference. This letter was mistranslated, as the phrase *causaban estado*, which meant that as the Dominican Government was "committed to a definite policy on all the points of the program of the Conference, it was useless that it should attend that Conference," was translated "caused a hitch in the relations between the two countries." That naturally created some feeling on the part of the United States, because if the translation had been correct the Dominican answer would certainly have been discourteous; thus showing what are the consequences of a mistranslation. Chili accepted in so far as economic questions were concerned, but stated that she would take no part in political questions or in arbitration. An unofficial intimation that an invitation for the representation of Cuba and Porto Rico in the Conference might be accepted was overlooked for obvious reasons.

It was apprehended by some, as already intimated, that the object of the United States in convening the Conference was to obtain decided political and commercial advantages over the other nations of this continent, making them almost its dependencies; and this view caused decided opposition to the project. There was nothing to show that this was the purpose of the United States, and it probably never entered the mind of either President Arthur or Secretary Frelinghuysen, who formulated the plan. Their motives, as expressed to their confidential associates, were to promote the peace and the material development of the American countries, and divert their trade from Europe to the United States. Mr. Blaine, whose boundless ambition grasped at all possibilities, may have desired a political alliance in which "The Great Republic" should figure as a protector of its smaller sisters, but he was violently opposed to the mixture of races, and never favored the annexation to the United States of any foreign territory, except Canada. The delegates from the United States did not propose in the Conference anything seemingly designed to accomplish such an end. Judging, therefore, by facts and results, these apprehensions were entirely groundless. In speaking of arbitration and commercial union, this will appear more plainly.

My personal knowledge of what took place in the Conference leads me to think that there was not on the part of Mr. Blaine any preconceived plan about the subjects that were to be considered, except, perhaps, that of arbitration, and that he not only had no prearranged plan, but even refused to express an opinion on any subject, or even to give instructions to the United States delegates when called on for them. Mr. Blaine's purpose, as it appears to me, was not to curtail in any manner whatever the full freedom of all the Latin-American nations represented in the Conference, but to allow equal freedom to the United States delegates, so that all might propose and agree on such points as they should think most advantageous to the interests of their respective countries, without any pressure and without even suggestions from the United States Government.

Even in regard to the question of arbitration, Mr. Blaine's wish was only that an agreement should be arrived at that all disputes arising among American nations should be ended by arbitration, with the very laudable and humane object of abolishing war; and he did not seem to have any special plan of his own. When he had to act upon one, he tried to harmonize the discordant opinions of the delegates, without intending to press it upon any one. His interference on this subject was only for the purpose of revising the plan which was accepted by a majority of the Conference; and to carry out this purpose he had to request one of the United States delegates to give up his opposition to the form in which the project was finally accepted.

It was understood and asserted at the time that even the general idea of arbitration was not unanimously supported by the representatives of the United States.

Personnel of the Conference.—Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Chili, the Argentine Republic, and Brazil accredited as delegates to the Conference their diplomatic representatives residing at Washington; Colombia, Venezuela, the Argentine Republic, and Brazil each sent two more delegates, while Mexico and Chili each sent only one more; all the other Republics were represented by one delegate each. The delegates from Honduras, Ecuador, and Bolivia were, besides, accredited to the United States Government as Envoys Extraordinary, and those from Chili and Brazil had a similar character before the Conference. The representatives of Salvador, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Uruguay came only as delegates, as did also the first representative from Hayti. The Uruguayan delegate was the only one who left before the close of the session. The first delegate from Hayti was obliged to return home on account of sickness, and his place was filled by the Haytian Minister Resident at Washington.

On the very day the Conference closed its session, that is, on April 19, 1890, there was received the acceptance by Hawaii of an invitation sent by Mr. Blaine, as Secretary of State of the United States, to send a representative to the Conference, and the announcement was made that Mr. Carter, then Hawaiian Minister in Washington, had been appointed a delegate. There was therefore no opportunity to pass upon Mr. Carter's credentials, thus avoiding the discussion of the question, regarding which the Argentine delegates were disposed to object, as they thought that Hawaii could not be represented in the Conference, because the Act of Congress authorizing the meeting of the Conference only referred to American nations, and the Hawaiian group is not in the American continents or their adjacent islands.

The delegates who were accredited as Ministers at Washington found very soon that their official relations to the United States Government considerably restricted their liberty of action as compared with that enjoyed by those of their colleagues who came on a transient mission.

Although President Cleveland issued the invitation for the Conference, he refrained, out of deference to his successor, from naming the United States delegates, and their appointment was made soon after President Harrison's inauguration. These appointments were severely censured in some quarters, because it was thought that some of the gentlemen named were not the best fitted for the mission, and some went so far as to think that their selection was an act of disrespect to the Latin-American nations. Whatever may have been the motive which governed the President of the United States in making

the appointments, I am sure that he did not intend to choose as representatives of this country gentlemen of little worth, much less to show any disrespect to the nations which the Government of the United States had invited to send delegates to Washington. The appointments were made in the manner usual in connection with offices of the highest rank. They were all ratified by the Senate. The gentlemen appointed represented all political parties, all sections of the country, and all branches of its industries; and they were all honorable gentlemen. Among them were two ex-Senators, four manufacturers, and two merchants; from which it seems that the intention was to select business men rather than diplomats.

It is entirely unnecessary, so far as the Latin-American nations are concerned, to inquire whether this Government could have selected gentlemen better fitted for the work, because if those appointed had not the necessary qualifications, the United States would have been the principal sufferer from any embarrassment that might have resulted.

The habits and manners of the two races represented in the Conference were so widely different; the urbanity of the Latin race is so exquisite, and it attaches so much importance to forms of courtesy and personal attention, which, as a general rule, are somewhat disregarded by the Anglo-Saxon race, that when they came in contact the contrast was very apparent. It was natural that the Latin-Americans, who did not know the Anglo-Saxon Americans well, should wonder at the simplicity of their manners, which almost looked like discourtesy, and that they should have attributed to impoliteness what was only the result of different customs and ways of life. The daily intercourse of the delegates during several months dispelled this impression, which had disappeared almost completely when the Conference adjourned. There were, however, among the United States delegates several who distinguished themselves by their courtesy and conciliatory spirit, especially Mr. Carnegie, Mr. Bliss, and Mr. Flint, very likely because they were somewhat acquainted with the Latin race.

Difficulties Growing Out of the Use of Different Languages.—One of the principal difficulties which arose in the Conference, and which, although apparently insignificant, had an influence that can hardly be over-estimated, was caused by the different languages spoken by the delegates. Only one of the United States delegates, Mr. Flint, had a meagre knowledge of colloquial Spanish, gained in commercial intercourse; one, Mr. Trescot, could read it; but the other delegates of the United States knew nothing of it. Several of the Latin-American members, and among them the Argentine delegates, who took so important a part in the proceedings of the Conference, did not speak English, although one of them by the end of the session understood it tolerably well. It certainly would have been preferable if all the

United States delegates had spoken Spanish, and been conversant with diplomatic affairs in general, especially with those of the Latin-American nations. It would have been desirable, also, that all the Latin-American delegates had spoken English and been familiar with the United States; but the inconvenience which resulted from these drawbacks was not essential, and was remedied in some degree by means of interpreters. Besides, the advantage of knowing both languages was a secondary one compared with all the other qualifications of a delegate. These circumstances made the services of interpreters indispensable.

My personal experience has shown me how difficult it is to make a good translation. Besides a perfect knowledge of the original language and of that in which the translation is made, other conditions are required, which are not always found in any one person, as, for instance, perfect familiarity with the subject-matter to which the translation refers, and a good command of language. This explains why it is almost impossible to translate a masterpiece, like Shakespeare's works. The best proof that can be presented of this difficulty is shown by retranslating a translation into its original language: for instance, take any masterpiece, either of English or Spanish, translate it to the other language, and then retranslate it into its original language, and the imperfections of the first translation will be apparent.

The above-stated difficulties of making a good translation are greatly enhanced when applied to the oral language. It is hard to realize how difficult it is to translate fairly a good speech until one has undertaken to do it. So far as speeches worthy of that name are concerned, they are generally made by good orators, and to do justice to the speeches the translator ought himself to possess high oratorical qualifications, because it is plain that if a man has not perfect command of his own language, and is not able to speak it elegantly, he much less can do so when using a foreign language, and even if he translates into his own language, he cannot do justice to an eloquent speech made in the other when he has not equal qualification as a speaker with the orator himself.

Another great difficulty in translating a speech is the fact that it requires a wonderfully good memory. A speech generally embraces several subjects, and in order that none be omitted the memory must grasp and retain them all, even in case notes are taken to avoid any omission.

The difficulty of correct translations, which was felt more especially in the early sessions of the Conference, caused the delegates of quick temper, when they did not fully understand the ideas expressed in the other language, to misinterpret them, and sometimes to consider them offensive and to return sharp answers, which provoked sharp retorts,

and not only disturbed the harmony among the delegates, but in some cases seemed even to threaten the success of the Conference.¹

The interpreters were required by Article IX. of the rules of the Conference, to interpret the speeches made at the discussions of the meetings as soon as they were delivered, stating the substance of the remarks made by the respective delegates.

The preceding remarks are not intended to cast any reflections on the ability of the gentlemen who served as interpreters in the Pan-American Conference, who were both able and competent, and who made very creditable translations, as such remarks only express my own conclusions, based on my personal experience when I have had to make translations and act as an interpreter. The qualifications as a Spanish and English scholar of Doctor Don José Ignacio Rodríguez, who succeeded Señor Pierra as the Spanish Secretary of the Conference, are too well known to be questioned. Dr. Rodríguez was such an efficient interpreter that I remember I thought on one occasion that he had misunderstood in interpreting into Spanish the remarks made in English by one of the United States delegates, and the speaker being requested to repeat his remarks, I found that I was the one who had misunderstood him and that Dr. Rodríguez's version was the correct one.

Reported Agreement between the Latin-American Countries.—It has been stated that the Chilean Government laid its views before the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the Empire of Brazil, proposing that the three nations should act in concert in the Conference, and that it had answers which it understood to mean that those Governments shared its views in regard to arbitration, and that they all would stand together. Probably this was the reason why the Chilean delegates consented to take part in some of the discussions relating to arbitration, and did not refrain from voting on that subject, except in the last days of the Conference, when the question had assumed a definite shape, and it was plain that their views in this regard were not shared by any of the other South American nations. The Argentine delegates declared, however, that their Government had not committed itself to Chili on this question. If the Brazilian Government gave Chili such assurance, it instructed its delegates in Washington, after the Empire was overthrown in Brazil in November, 1889, and the

¹ In an answer I wrote in June, 1890, to severe strictures against the United States and Mexican delegates made by Señor Don Fidel G. Pierra, and published on May 4th of that year in *La Nación*, a newspaper of Buenos Ayres, Argentina, and which will be found in the Appendix at the end of this paper, I dwelt especially on the inconveniences, serious troubles, and frequent misunderstandings caused in the early sessions of the Pan-American Conference by the use of different languages spoken by its members.

Republican Government established, to act in perfect accord with those of Argentina, as at that time the relations between the two countries had assumed a very cordial and intimate character. That, of course, increased very considerably the strength of the Argentine delegates, as the Brazilians were able men, and represented the largest country in South America, and up to that time it was understood that their instructions required them to act in concert with the Chilean delegates.

The delegates from Paraguay and Uruguay had been instructed by their respective Governments to act in accord with the Argentine delegates, and so they did; but the delegate from Uruguay found it difficult to act in that way, and rather than disobey the instructions of his Government, he soon decided to give up his position, and to return to London, where he was accredited as Uruguayan diplomatic representative.

Jealousy among the South American Nations.—There are in South America two nations which have acquired very great importance—one on account of its large territorial extent, its immense natural resources, favored by an excellent system of navigable rivers, and its extraordinary material progress; the other by its unrivalled position on the Pacific, by possessing as it does almost one half of the western coast of South America, by its habits of order and industry, and by its rapid acquisition of national and individual wealth. I refer to the Argentine Republic and to Chili. Although Brazil has a larger territory and population than these two nations together, the political transition which was in progress in that country prevented it, then, from being a centre of political combinations. The last war on the Pacific, the results of which were not yet an accomplished fact, naturally caused very great excitement. It is only natural that the nations which were conquered in that war should look upon the Argentine Republic as the centre of strength for the maintenance of the political equilibrium or *statu quo*; and that, for the same reasons, they should look with distrust upon Chili, and apprehend a repetition of events similar to the war of 1879-1883. It was natural, too, that this political excitement, which is merely alluded to here, should be felt in the workings of the Conference, and it is absolutely necessary to take it into consideration to explain some of the incidents which took place in that assembly.

This conflict of political views and interests did not, however, prevent personal and official relations among the South American delegates from being so courteous and cordial that no one who was not aware of the feelings and tendencies of the various countries could perceive that any difference existed among them. On almost all questions presented in the Conference they acted in accord; even the Chilean and

Argentine delegates did so in the discussion of the rules, and, especially, the one concerning the minority report on customs union and reciprocity treaties.

Central America is too far from Chili and the Argentine Republic to take part in the political complications of South America, but she has a pending question of her own—the confederation of the five Central American States—which is a transcendent one, on which, it seems, all the States are not in complete accord, and this fact could not fail to influence the conduct of their representatives in the Conference. The projected Nicaragua Canal was also a source of difference between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

I would not convey an exact idea of the tendencies and apprehensions which prevailed in the Conference, should I omit to say that Guatemala looked upon Mexico with distrust,¹ because she imagined that the Mexican Government cherished certain designs against her—a supposition by no means correct—and this notwithstanding that the long boundary dispute between Mexico and Guatemala had then been settled, first by the preliminary bases signed in New York, on August 12, 1882, between General J. Rufino Barrios, President of Guatemala, and myself, and by the final boundary treaty signed in the City of Mexico on the 27th of the following September. It was inevitable that this fear should also be felt in the Conference.

Mexico, if not the only one, was nevertheless one of the few Latin-American nations which could properly be considered as really impartial in regard to South American questions. On account of the immense distance which separates her from her southern sisters, and the lack of means of communication, which almost wholly prevents commercial relations with them, Mexico has no political interest in the subjects agitated in those countries. Hence she looks upon all the nations of the southern continent as friends and sisters, and has a most cordial and sincere wish for the prosperity and welfare of each of them. Although Mexico ardently desires that the principles of equity and justice should prevail among the American nations, and although she might disapprove of the conduct of any of them which, in her opinion, was subversive of those principles, and might even go so far as to express her disapproval, she is not called upon to take any active part in regard to questions which may arise in South America, and, therefore, she is not only neutral, but perfectly impartial.

¹ Fortunately the condition of things which existed in 1889 is rapidly disappearing. The last boundary question between Mexico and Guatemala, growing out of the interpretation of the treaty of September 27, 1882, was amicably settled by the convention of April 1, 1896, and the late enlightened ruler of Guatemala, General José Maria Reyna Barrios, inaugurated a change of policy which I consider very beneficial to that country.