**NLI 13087/3**

**27 April 1910**

**Hal Gielgud, Manager of the Peruvian Amazon Company (PAC), to Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office**

**2 p. with Casement notes**

THE PERUVIAN AMAZON COMPANY, LIMITED

Salisbury House,

London Wall,

LONDON, E.C.

27th April 1910

Sir:

My Directors have noticed with great astonishment the written statement by His Majesty's Secretary f State for Foreign Affairs, made in reply to a further question by Mr. Wedgewood as to the alleged maltreatment of the Indians in the Putumayo. Sir E. Grey is reported by the “Financial Times” of the 22nd inst. to have stated that “the Company has ignored his suggestion to send a commission, and the question of approaching the Peruvian Government on the subject was under consideration.”

The steps that may have been taken by Sir E. Grey in regard to approaching the Peruvian Government are naturally a subject as to which the Board of this Company have no information beyond what may be gathered from the written answer to Mr. Wedgewood above referred to. They must, however, take the strongest exception to the assertion that the Company has ignored the suggestion to send a commission. The correspondence, Sir, that has passed between yourself and the Company proves the direct contrary. The suggestion was duly considered with the serious attentions to which any communication from a member of His Majesty's Government is entitled. It was, however, felt by the Board, as has already been pointed out to you, that the investigation of these charges was a matter for the Peruvian Government, who had indeed already interested [**Casement note:** “Why? The charges were against the Company, its methods its agents & the system of slavery by which its rubber was obtained. See too, even Reyes de Castro's defense (prior) ?? in fights between private persons.”] themselves in the matter, and – if I may be allowed to judge by the answer given to Mr. Wedgewood by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs on the 14th ult., as reported in “The Times” of the following day, which ended with the words: “We understand the Peruvian Government have of their own accord instituted inquiry into the allegations of cruelty, and, if there should be any foundation for them, will adopt remedial measures” – His Majesty's Foreign Office was perfectly satisfied with the position.

Subsequently to that, however, on the 1st inst. I received a further letter from you referring to the extracts from the Company's Minute Book which I had the honour to send you. I am to point out to you that such a commission as that contemplated in the Minutes referred to would naturally in the ordinary course have reported on that most important factor in the situation, the labour supply, involving a discussion of the relations between the Indians and whites. [**Casement underlining with note:** Mr. Read already 2 years in office & unaware of this “most important factor”!] Consequently the Minutes in question are not entirely irrelevant to the question of investigation of the charges which had been brought against the Company.

In view of the full explanation of their position in the matter which I had the honour to submit to you in my letter of the 8th ult., the Board desires respectfully to express their regret that Sir E. Grey should – as reported – have thought it fit to state publicly that “the Company had ignored the suggestion to send a commission”.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

(signed) H.L. Gielgud

Secretary & Manager