**NLI 13087/4**

**Capt. T.W. Whiffen to Foreign Office denying and refuting Arana allegations**

**24 March 1910**

[Foreign Office embossment]

Copy.

Confidential.

(10727)

ALDWICK

SUSSEX,

March 24, 1910.

The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,

Downing Street.

Sir:–

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Foreign Office letter No. 47301/09 dated London 17th III, 1910 which has only today come into my hands as I have been prostrated with fever for the last week.

As regards the allegations made against me by Mr. Julio Arana – I have the honour to deny absolutely and categorically that after “I had been requested to furnish Sir E. Grey with a report on the conditions prevailing in the Putumayo District, (or at any other time) I approached Senor Arana with the proposal that, if I were paid the sum of One thousand Pounds, (or any other sum) I should be prepared to undertake to draw up a Report entirely favourable to the Company for the information of Sir E. Grey.”

As it is necessary for the proper elucidation of this matter to understand the immediate relation that existed between myself and Mr. Julio Arana I desire to discuss his circular addressed “Private” to the Shareholders of the Peruvian Amazon Company Limited dated London 28th 1909 XII, paragraph XIX and succeeding paragraphs.

1. re XIX. As stated in my report of October 21st last I called upon Mr. Arana at Manaos in May 1909. I explained the position of affairs in the Putumayo District and he promised sweeping reforms including the recall of Mr. Macedo Chief of the Putumayo together with a complete change of personnel qualifying his statement however by explaining that such could not be carried out at one sweep. He followed this up by asking me whether I could furnish a report for his own information and guidance respecting the working of rubber in the region, as to the possibilities of each Section in the production of the article, and more especially in relation to leakage. As I had taken voluminous notes giving my conclusions as to the true possible output of each Section together with my observations as to leakage i.e. the sale of rubber by employees to outsiders across the Colombian Brazilian frontiers – that is to say outside the debated limits – and the consequent defrauding of the Company, I agreed to furnish a report which would of course include my observations as to the treatment of the natives. Mr. Julio Arana then himself offered to pay part of my expenses (the exact sum was not mentioned) to the Putumayo and district in return for the said report. He gave me a letter addressed to Mr. Abel Alarco his representative in London and asked me at the same time to meet him in London and then to furnish him with the report.

2. re XX. At the beginning of October 1909 I received a letter from Mr. Arana stating that he had returned to Europe and would be glad to see me at the earliest opportunity. This letter was dated from the “Nouvel Hotel” Paris. I happened to be in Paris at the time and I may here mention that I had not then received any communication from the Foreign Office although my report on the alleged atrocities had already been drafted for the information of the British Consul at Iquitos. In the interview the matter of the “Truth” allegations was mentioned and I told Mr. Arana that I had also been approached by “Truth” but that I did not intend to give them “copy” as publicity would defeat its own ends. At the same time I mentioned that I considered it my duty to put the British Consul at Iquitos – Mr. David Cazes who was then in England – “au courant” with the true facts. We arranged to meet in London at an early date to discuss further the subject of my personal report re the working of rubber in the Putumayo.

(I may here mention that I considered myself bound to fulfil my promise and furnish a report if it were still required.)

In the subsequent interview which I had with Mr. Arana in London I did not show him – at this or any other time – a communication from the Foreign Office but I did mention that I had had such a request. He asked me what I intended to do in the matter. I replied that I should rewrite the report that I had made for the British Consul at Iquitos and hand it over to the Foreign Office. He asked me whether I was quite decided in the matter. I replied that I had no option. This is all that was said on the subject but I feel certain that it was on account of this decision on my part that Mr. Arana eventually did not wish to pay me for a report – and this freed me from my engagement – a report which would admittedly, on account of its invaluable information re leakage, have been of the greatest value to the Company’s Agents in the Putumayo.

And now as regards the subject under discussion at this interview – the report above mentioned – I need only mention that I read over to Mr. Arana on this occasion parts of a draft report which I had prepared a long time previously. He seemed most anxious to become possessed of the information contained therein.\*

**[footnote]**\* I should here like to add that in an interview I had at the Foreign Office on November 9th last, I mentioned the fact that I had been in recent communication with Mr. Julio Arana. This is referred to in a Foreign Office Letter addressed to me dated London 6th XII. 1909 No. 44117/09.

To come to an important point which I wish to make perfectly clear. My knowledge of Spanish is imperfect and in all my interviews with Mr. Arana I found it a great convenience, when he was able to understand exactly what I said, to scribble the words in Spanish on any handy piece of paper. It is possible therefore that Mr. Arana has one or any number of such pieces of paper in his possession. But that he has in his possession a continuous note written in the equivalent Spanish of his English rendering given in the Circular I most emphatically deny. That any such scrap of scraps of paper aforementioned – that he may have in his possession, have or has the meaning which he attributed to it or them I more emphatically deny.

3. re. XXI. In the course of the discussion that I had with the gentleman in question, on this last occasion, I mentioned that the Company owed me the sum of thirty pounds which was due to my bearer John Brown who had been in the service of J.C. Arana. This debt was taken over by me at the time that the boy left the Company’s employ.

[**Casement note:** Quite true. I got this money in La Chorrera & handed it to John Brown.]

Mr. Arana asked me to call at his office to give him full particulars of the boy and his service so that he could make a claim in the ordinary way. This I did. Whether there happened tobe a Board meeting on this occasion I have no knowledge.

4. re. XXII. I did not call on Mr. Arana on the following day. In the course of the ensuing few days I did call on him at the Hotel Cecil where he informed me that he would be glad to receive my report but that as the other directors refused to sanction any payment whatever he would be unable to reimburse me in any way. The report was never sent by me to Mr. Arana.

5. re. L. 47301 addressed Foreign Office dated London, 30th XII. 1909, from the part of the Peruvian Amazon Company Limited in re paragraph 5.

The greater part of this paragraph has been fully answered by me. As regards the copy of Minute. It does not, so far as I can fathom suggest that I called at the Board. The wording is simply that Mr. Arana led me subsequently to believe viz: that the Board of Directors refused to sanction any money payment to me in return for a report on the rubber working in the district of the Putumayo. A personal undertaking by Mr. Arana which had no relation as far as I am concerned with the Company at all.

6. I have two further matters to bring to the notice of the Secretary Sir E. Grey. Only today I was requested by the Editor of “Truth” to call at his office and he informed me that a letter had been confidentially shewn him emanating from the part of a firm in Manaos which contained allegations against me. [**Casement note:** A true Arana dodge this.] Neither the name of the writer or that of the receiver was divulged. The letter states:–

(i) That Mr. W.E. Hardenburg was guilty of uttering and forging bills in Manaos and that there was a warrant out for his arrest on that charge. [RC note: A lie – No warrant I think even was issued.]

(ii) That Captain T.H. Whiffen was a man of like character who having obtained large quantities of goods on credit in Iquitos tried to escape without payment and was arrested on board ship. **[Casement note**: another lie**]**

(iii) That the latter is known to have been himself guilty of the most disgraceful atrocities against the natives of the Putumayo.

There is only one man in Manaos who as far as I am aware knows me by name even and who therefore alone could have circulated such an extraordinary story – Mr. Julio Arana.

Personally I am convinced, on account of this latter fact taken in conjunction with Mr. Arana’s false and misleading statement of my relations with him, that he (Mr. Arana) will stick at nothing to gain his end viz:– the destruction of the credibility of all witnesses ranged against him.

7. Further I have private information from the region of the Putumayo and I learn that the Company is busy replacing their employees with, as my correspondent puts it, “40 a year Englishmen”. The idea obviously is to suggest that no atrocities can take place in the presence of Englishmen, and the Putumayo agents are busily preparing against the time when a Commission may visit them and be able to report that there is no foundation for the recently made allegations. [**Casement note:** Tizon’s appointment was one of these steps.]

I beg to return as requested the printed letter addressed to the Shareholders of the Peruvian Amazon Company. I have a copy taken of this and I am also keeping a copy of the Peruvian Amazon Company’s letter No. 47301 dated 30th XII 1909. I will inform the Foreign Office of any action I may contemplate in the matter.

I do not consider it incumbent upon me to enter into the details of the Company’s reply. It does not in any way traverse my report and in no instance does it refute the allegations, being full of accusations against those bringing such allegations, together with futile platitudes respecting the power of the Government of Peru in the region.

I have, &c.

T.W. Whiffen

Captain

**[under discussion.]**