**TNA FO 371/968**

**Casement to Sir Edward Grey**

**3 September 1910**

Confidential,

Iquitos

3 September 1910

Sir

I have the honour to report my arrival, along with the members of the Commission appointed by the Peruvian Amazon Company, at this place on the 31st ultimo.

My stay at Manaos had been only a day, from 16th to 17th August. During the course of the latter day I found the Columbian Consul at Manaos, Dr. Santiago Razo, had been seeking me and I received from the Acting British Vice Consul (Mr. Denning) a card of the Consul's on which he had written to beg that I would grant him an interview “in order to discuss important matters concerning the Putumayo.”

I asked the Acting Vice Consul to write to acknowledge the visit and to say that as I was leaving Manaos almost immediately I was debarred from returning it.

I understand that Colonel Bertie and the other members of the Commission during their stay at Manaos - from 16th to 19th August - met the Columbian Consul who discussed with them matters in the Putumayo and the Company's affairs but that the statements made by the Consul appeared to be unsupported by any trustworthy evidence.

On arrival at Iquitos, the members of the Commission took up their quarters in the house of the Peruvian Amazon Company while I became the guest of David Cazes the British Consul here. I called on the Prefect of the Department of Loreto, of which Iquitos is the governing centre, on the afternoon of my arrival being introduced by Mr. Cazes who throughout the interview acted as interpreter.

The Prefect promised every assistance stating that he had been informed from Lima of the coming of the Commission and that he was instructed to give me every facility.

Our conversation was a long and cordial one. He spoke in praise of the Peruvian Amazon Company and assured me that the allegations which appeared in “Truth” were “fables”.

I had informed Mr. Barnes of my intended visit to the Prefect and offered to go with the Commission when, if they so desired it, Mr. Cazes would present them. Mr. Barnes stated that arrangements had already been made by the local agents of the Peruvian Amazon Coy to personally introduce them and I did not, therefore, accompany them next day when they visited the Prefect.

Reference to the Commission has appeared in the local press and I transmit copies of such papers as have come to my notice containing comments upon it. There are actually four daily papers in Iquitos - viz - the “Loreto Comercial”, “El Orients”, “El Heraldo” and “La Nacional”. The two first are said to be the more important; the last was described to me as in the nature of a blackmailing organ.

It will be seen from these papers that prior to the arrival of the Commission it was assumed to be officially organised and even sent out by His Majesty's Government but the “rectification” in “El Oriente”of 1st instant goes to quite the other extreme.

I drew the attention of the members of the Commission to this categoric assertion of the duties as being “exclusively mercantile and industrial” yesterday morning when we were gathered together to collectively discuss the most useful mode of procedure to be followed during our stay in Iquitos and our forthcoming visit to the Putumayo.

They assured me that it had not been insisted by any of themselves or with their knowledge and that it misrepresented and quite unduly limited the scope of their inquiry as based on the detailed instructions issued to them by the Peruvian Amazon Company in London.

They showed me a copy of these instructions which are sufficiently clear and general to cover the ground of a full and fair inquiry with the actual state of things on the Putumayo.

Mr. Cazes received by this mail a letter from Mr. Julio C. Arana in London and as it coincides in its terms with this locally originating definition of the functions of the Commission I think it of sufficient interest to transmit a copy, with Mr. Cazes permission, for your information.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

Roger Casement.