

SPECIAL MESSAGE ON PANAMA CANAL

President Roosevelt Transmits His Views to Congress.

TREATY SHOULD BE RATIFIED

Says There Was No Complicity on Part of This Government in Revolution—Charges Colombia with Greed—All Interests Demand Canal.

Washington, Jan. 4.—President Roosevelt's special message to congress on the subject of the Panama canal treaty treats largely of the Panama rebellion, the incidents leading up to it and the part of the United States in it.

He refers to the previous legislation authorizing the president to conclude a treaty with Colombia for the building of the canal, and if after a reasonable lapse of time it was found impossible to secure the necessary territory from Colombia to revert to the Nicaraguan route for the construction of the canal. The later alternative, he says, is now unnecessary, as the control of the necessary territory at Panama has been secured. Referring to the rejection of the treaty with Colombia by that nation, he says:

"This act marked the climax of the effort on the part of the United States to secure, so far as legislation was concerned, an interoceanic canal across the isthmus. The effort to secure a treaty for this purpose with one of the Central American republics did not stand on the same footing with the effort to secure a treaty under any ordinary conditions.

"Under the Hay-Pauncefote treaty it was explicitly provided that the United States should control, police and protect the canal which was to be built, keeping it open for the vessels of all nations on equal terms. The United States thus assumed the position of guarantor of the canal and of its peaceful use by all the world. The guaranty included as a matter of course the building of the canal. The enterprise was recognized as responding to an international need; and it would be the veriest travesty on right and justice to treat the governments in possession of the isthmus as having the right to close the gates of intercourse on the great highways of the world, and justify the act by the pretension that these avenues of trade and travel belong to them and that they choose to shut them."

Position of United States.

"When this government submitted to Colombia the Hay-Herran treaty three things were, therefore, already settled: 'One was that the canal should be built. The time for delay, the time for permitting the attempt to be made by private enterprise, the time for permitting any government of anti-social spirit and of imperfect development to bar the work, was past. The United States had assumed in connection with the canal certain responsibilities not only to its own people, but to the civilized world, which imperatively demanded that there should no longer be delay in beginning the work. 'Second—While it was settled that the canal should be built without unnecessary or improper delay, it was no less clearly shown to be our purpose to deal not merely in spirit of expediency but in spirit of generosity with the people through whose land we might build it. The Hay-Herran treaty, if it erred at all, erred in the direction of an over-generosity towards the Colombian government, in our anxiety to be fair we had gone to the very verge in yielding to a weak nation's demands what that nation was helplessly unable to enforce from us against our will. The only criticism made upon the administration for the terms of the Hay-Herran treaty were for having granted too much to Colombia, not for failure to grant enough. Neither in the congress nor in the public press at the time that this treaty was promulgated, was there any complaint that it did not in the fullest and amplest manner guarantee to Colombia everything that she could by any color of title demand.

"That the canal itself was eagerly demanded by the people of the locality through which it was to pass, and that the people of this locality no less eagerly longed for its construction under American control, are shown by the unanimity of action in the new Panama republic. Furthermore, Colombia, after having rejected the treaty in spite of our protests and warnings when it was in her power to accept it, has since shown the utmost eagerness to accept the same treaty if only the status quo could be restored. One of the men standing highest in the official circles of Colombia, on November 6, addressed the American minister at Bogota, saying that if the government of the United States would land troops to preserve Colombian sovereignty and the transit, the Colombian government would declare martial law, and, by virtue of vested constitutional authority, when public order is disturbed, [would] approve by decree the ratification of the canal treaty as signed; or, if the government of the United States prefers, [would] call extra session of the congress—with new and friendly members—next May to approve the treaty. Having these facts in view, there is no shadow of question that the government of the United States proposed a treaty which was not merely just, but generous to Colombia, which our people regarded as settling, if at all, on the side of over-generosity; which was hailed with delight by the people of the immediate locality through which the canal was to pass, who were most concerned as to the new order of things, and which the Colombian authorities now recognize as being so good that they are willing to promise its unconditional ratification if only we will desert those who have shown themselves our friends and restore to those who have shown themselves unfriendly the power to undo what they did. I pass by the question as to what assurance we have that they would not keep their pledge and not again refuse to ratify the treaty; they had the power; for, of course, will not for one moment discuss the possibility of the United States committing an act of such baseness as to abandon the new republic of Panama.

"Third—Finally the congress definitely settled where the canal was to be built. It was provided that a treaty should be made for building the canal across the isthmus of Panama; and if, after reasonable time, it proved impossible to secure such treaty, that then we should go to Nicaragua. The treaty has been made; for it needs no argument to show that the intent of the congress was to insure a canal across Panama and that neither the republic granting the title was called New Granada, Colombia or Panama mattered not one whit. As events turned out, the question of 'reasonable time' did not enter into the matter at all. Although, as the months went by, it became increasingly improbable that the Colombian congress would ratify the treaty or take steps which would be equivalent thereto, yet all chance for such action on their part did not vanish until the congress closed at the end of October; and within three days thereafter the revolution in Panama had broken out. Panama became an inde-

pendent state, and the control of the territory necessary for building the canal then became obtainable. The condition under which alone we could have gone to Nicaragua through the isthmus of Nicaragua, if the pending treaty with Panama should not be ratified by the senate, this would not alter the fact that we could not go to Nicaragua. The congress had decided the route, and there is no alternative under existing legislation."

The president says that after the failure of the Colombian congress to ratify the treaty it seemed that the government would have to go to the Nicaraguan route, and he has made the original draft of his message to congress along that line. This was one of three alternatives that confronted the government. Another was that the people of Panama might accept the canal as their own interests into their own hands and establish a government competent and willing to do its share in the construction of the canal. This is what occurred, and made the receiving of the Nicaraguan route unnecessary, and, in fact, impossible under the authority of the president as vested in him by the action of congress.

Report of Commander Hubbard.

The president emphatically denies that this government had any part in the instigating of this revolution. He knew, as all the world did, that such was imminent, and the navy department took necessary measures to protect American interests, but nothing further. He gives copies of the orders to command the officers of American warships, and their various reports upon the situation. He charges Colombia with virtually making war upon the United States at Colon, and quotes the report of Commander Hubbard, of the Nashville, dated November 5, to sustain this charge. In this report Commander Hubbard says, in part: "Pending a complete report of the occurrence of the late revolution at Colon, Colombia I most respectfully invite the department's attention to those of the date of Wednesday, November 4, which amounted to practically the making of war against the United States by the officer in command of the Colombian troops in Colon. At one o'clock p. m. on that date I was summoned on shore by a preconcerted signal, and on landing met the United States consul, vice consul and Col. Shaler, the general superintendent of the Panama railroad. The consul informed me that he had received notice from the officer commanding the Colombian troops, Col. Torres, through the prefect of Colon, to the effect that the Colombian officers, Gen. Tobal and Amaya, who had been seized in Panama on the evening of the 3d of November by the independents and held as prisoners, were not released by two o'clock p. m. Col. Torres would permit the troops of Colon and kill every United States citizen in the place, and my advice and action were requested. I advised that all the United States citizens should take refuge in the stone building susceptible of being put into good state for defense, and that I would immediately land such body of men, with extra arms for arming the citizens, as the commander of the ship would permit. This was agreed to and I immediately returned on board, arriving at 1:35 p. m. The order for landing was immediately given, and at 2:30 p. m. the boats left the ship with a party of 42 men under the command of Lieut. Commander H. M. Witzel, with Midshipman J. P. Jackson as second in command. Time being pressing, I gave verbal orders to Mr. Witzel to take the building above referred to, to put it into the best state of defense possible, and protect the lives of the citizens assembled there—not firing unless fired upon. . . . The Colombians surrounded the building of the railroad company almost immediately after we had taken possession, and for about one and a half hours their attitude was most threatening, it being seemingly their purpose to provoke an attack. Happily our men were cool and steady, and while the tension was very great no shot was fired. At about 3:30 p. m. Col. Torres came into the building for an interview and expressed himself as most friendly to Americans, claiming that the whole affair was a misunderstanding and that he would like to send the alcalde of Colon to Panama to see Gen. Tobal and have him direct the discontinuance of the show of force. A special train was furnished to take the alcalde guaranteed. At about 5:30 p. m. Col. Torres made the proposition of withdrawing his troops to Monkey Hill, if I would withdraw the Nashville's force and leave the town in possession of the rebels until the return of the alcalde on the morning of the 5th. After an interview with the United States consul and Col. Shaler as to the probability of good faith in the matter, I decided to accept the proposition and brought my men on board the ship. In view of the disparity in numbers between my force and that of the Colombians, nearly ten to one, making me desirous of avoiding a conflict so long as the object in view, the protection of American citizens, was not imperiled.

"I am positive that the determined attitude of our men, their coolness and evident intention of standing on a firm ground, had a most salutary and decisive effect on the immediate situation and was the initial step in the ultimate abandoning of Colon by these troops and their return to Cartagena (Col.).

"I feel that I cannot sufficiently strongly represent to the department the grossness of this outrage and the insult to our dignity, even apart from the savagery of the threat.

In view of the reports of the various naval officers in Panama waters the president concludes "that, instead of there having been too much provision by the American government for the maintenance of order and the protection of life and property on the isthmus, the orders for the movement of the American warships had been too long delayed; so long, in fact, that there were but 40 marines and sailors available to land and protect the lives of American men and women. It was only the coolness and gallantry with which this little band of men wearing the American uniform faced ten times their number of armed foes, being armed with the most vicious threat of the Colombian commander, that prevented a murderous catastrophe. At Panama, when the revolution broke out, there was no American man-of-war and no American troops. At Colon, Commander Hubbard acted with entire impartiality towards both sides, preventing any movement, whether by the Colombians or the Panamanians, which would tend to produce bloodshed. On November 9 he prevented a body of the revolutionists from landing at Colon."

No Complicity in Revolution.

Referring to the charges of complicity of this government in the revolution the president says: "I hesitate to refer to the injurious insinuations which have been made of complicity by this government in the revolutionary movement in Panama. They are as destitute of foundation as of propriety. The only excuse for insinuating them is the fear lest unthinking persons might mistake for acquiescence the silence of mere self-respect. I think proper to say, therefore, that no one connected with this government had any part in preparing, inciting or encouraging the late revolution on the isthmus of Panama, and that save from the reports of our military and naval officers, given above, no one connected with this government had any previous knowledge of the revolution except such as was accessible to any person of ordinary intelligence who read the newspapers and kept up a current acquaintance with public affairs.

After thus treating extensively the events leading up to and during the revolution the president refers to the recognition of the new government by the United States, and in this connection he says: "By the unanimous action of its people, without the firing of a shot—with a unanimity hardly before recorded in any similar case—the people of Panama declared themselves an independent republic. Their recognition by this government was based upon a state of facts in no way dependent for its justification upon our action in ordinary cases. I have not

denied, nor do I wish to deny, either the validity or the propriety of the general rule that a new state should not be recognized as independent till it has shown its ability to maintain its independence. This rule is derived from the principle of nonintervention, and as a corollary of that principle has generally been observed by the United States. But, like the principle of nonintervention, it is subject to exceptions, and there are in my opinion clear and imperative reasons why a departure from it was justified and even required in the present instance. These reasons are: first, our treaty rights; second, our national interests and safety; and, third, the interests of collective civilization."

Reasons for Ratification.

He reviews these reasons at considerable length and justifies the speedy recognition in either and all of them. He refers to precedents to show that treaties concluded with one nation are binding upon the successors of that nation, thus the treaty of 1846 with New Granada and now to Panama. Of this second reason he says:

"This recognition was, in the second place, further justified by the highest considerations of our national interests and safety. In all the range of our international relations, I do not hesitate to affirm that there is nothing of greater or more pressing importance than the construction of an interoceanic canal. Long acknowledged to be essential to our commercial development, it has become, in the present, the great extension of our territorial dominion, more than ever essential to our national self-defense. . . . In the light of our present situation, the establishment of easy and speedy communication by sea between the Atlantic and the Pacific presents itself not simply as something to be desired, but as an object to be positively and promptly attained. Reasons of convenience have been superseded by reasons of what necessity, which do not admit of indefinite delays."

In the same connection he charges Colombia with attempting to so delay the ratification of any canal treaty as to place that government in a position not only to secure the \$10,000,000 offered in compensation by this government, but to secure the \$40,000,000 promised the Panama Canal company for its franchise and rights as well. By waiting until October 31, 1904, the franchise of the canal company would have expired, and the Colombian government be in a position to seize its property and rights on the isthmus, and then be in a position to demand of the United States the payment of that government of both sums. In this connection he says:

"Such is the scheme to which it was proposed that the United States should place itself in a position. The hindrance to the construction of the canal was to be relegated to the indefinite future, while Colombia was, by reason of her own delay, to be placed in the more advantageous position of coming on merely to the compensation to be paid by the United States for the privilege of completing the canal, but also the \$40,000,000 authorized by the act of 1902 to be paid for the property of the New Panama Canal company. That the attempt to carry out this scheme would have brought Colombia into conflict with the government of France cannot be doubted; nor could the United States have counted upon immunity from the consequences of the treaty, inasmuch as the construction of the canal was to be subjected. On the first appearance of danger to Colombia, this government would have been summoned to interpose in order to give effect to the provisions of the treaty of 1846; and all this in support of a plan which, while characterized in its first stage by the wanton disregard of our own highest interests, was likely to end in further injury to the citizens of a friendly nation, whose enormous losses in their generous efforts to pierce the isthmus have become a matter of history."

Of the third reason for speedy recognition the president says in part: "In the third place, I confidently maintain that the recognition of the republic of Panama was an act justified by the interests of collective civilization. If a government could be said to have received a mandate from civilization to effect an object the accomplishment of which was demanded in the interest of the civilization of the world, it would be in a position with regard to the interoceanic canal. Since our purpose to build the canal was definitely announced, there have come from all quarters assurances of our own highest interests, in which even Colombia herself at one time participated; and to general assurances were added specific acts and declarations. In order that no obstacle might stand in our way, I decided to retain important rights under the Clayton-Bulwer treaty and agreed to its abrogation, receiving in return nothing but our honorable pledge to build the canal and protect it as an open highway."

Justified by Collective Civilization.

"That our position as the mandator of civilization is by no means unenviable is shown by the promptitude with which the powers have, one after another, followed our lead in recognizing Panama as an independent state. Our action in recognizing the new republic has been followed by like recognition on the part of France, Germany, Denmark, Russia, Sweden and Norway, Nicaragua, Peru, China, Cuba, Great Britain, Italy, Costa Rica, Japan and Austria-Hungary."

In view of the manifest consideration of treaty right and obligation, of national interest and safety, and of collective civilization, by which our government was constrained to act, I am at a loss to comprehend of using any force, or treaty can discern in the recognition of the republic of Panama only a general approval of the principle of 'revolution' by which a given government is overthrown and a new one substituted. A country separated from another, only the amplest justification can warrant a revolutionary movement of either kind. But there is no fixed rule which can be applied to all such cases, and each case must be judged on its own merits. There have been many revolutionary movements, many movements for the dismemberment of countries, which were evil, tried by any standard of justice, and which interested and fair minded observers acquiesced with the circumstances can fail to feel that Panama had the amplest justification for separation from Colombia under the conditions existing, and, moreover, that its action was in the highest degree beneficial to the interests of the entire civilized world by securing the immediate opportunity for the building of the interoceanic canal. . . . The people of the adjacent parts of Central and South America, will be greatly benefited by the building of the canal and the guarantee of sea communication along its line, and hand in hand with the benefits to them will go the benefit to us and to mankind. By our prompt and decisive action, not only have our interests and those of the people at large been conserved, but we have forestalled complications which were likely to be fruitful in loss to ourselves, and in bloodshed and suffering to the people of the isthmus. . . . We were invited by Colombia to do, for a twofold purpose of defeating our own rights and interests and of compelling the civilized world, and of compelling the submission of the people of the isthmus to those whom they regarded as oppressors, we shall, as in duty bound, keep the transit open and prevent its invasion. Meanwhile, the only question now before us is that of the ratification of the treaty. For it is to be remembered that a treaty to ratify the treaty will not undo what has been done, will not restore Panama to Colombia, and will not alter our obligations to the people of the isthmus, and to prevent any outside power from menacing this transit."

In conclusion let me repeat that the question actually before this government is not that of recognizing a new republic as an independent republic. That is already an accomplished fact. The question is, and the only question is, whether or not we shall build an isthmian canal."

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It is natural for a cannibal to love his fellow man.—Chicago Daily News.

How Did He Guess It?

Bobby—I say, Mr. Updyke, what do you suppose Clara said about you just before you came in?
Mr. Updyke—I haven't an idea in the world, Robert.
Bobby (amazed)—Well, you've guessed it! That's just what she did say!—Stray Stories.

As Revised.

Crowell—Say, some of these old maxims make me weary. Now, there's the one about a friend in need being a friend indeed.
Howell—Well, what's the matter with that?
"Why, a friend indeed is a friend who isn't in need."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

"Everybody says the baby looks like you, Doesn't that please you?" "I don't know," replied Poppley. "but I tell you what; I'm glad nobody thinks of saying I look like the baby."—Philadelphia Ledger.

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