SPECIAL MESSAGE ON CANAL

President Communicates with Congress Concerning New Treaty.

POSITION OF UNITED STATES IN MATTER

Recites History of Isthmian Commerce and Responsibility of This Government for Its Freedom.

(Continued from First Page.)

over it. The treaty in this respect simply proceeded on the lines on which all negotiations leading up to the present situation have been conducted. In those negotiations the exercise by the United States, subject to the paramount rights of the local sovereign, of a substantial control over the canal and the immediately adjacent territory, has been treated as a fundamental part of any arrangement that might be made. It has formed an essential feature of all our plans, and its necessity is fully recognized in the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. The congress, in providing that such control should be exercised, adopted no new principle, but only incorporated in its legislation a condition the importance and propriety of which were universally recognized. During all the years of negotiation and discussion that preceded the conclusion of the Hay-Herran treaty, Colombia never intimated that the requirement by the United States of control over the canal strip would render unattainable the construction of a canal by way of the isthmus of Panama; nor were we advised, during the months when legislation of 1902 was pending before the congress, that the terms which it embodied would render negotiations with Colombia impracticable. It is plain that no nation could construct and guarantee the neutrality of the canal with a less degree of control than was stipulated for in the Hay-Herran treaty. A refusal to grant such degree of control was necessarily a refusal to make any practical treaty at all. Such refusal, therefore, squarely raised the question whether Colombia was entitled to bar the transit of the world's traffic across the isthmus.

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 erring, if at all, on the side of overgenerosity; 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 their interests, and in 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 would have that they would now keep their pledge and not again refuse to ratify the treaty if they had the power; for, of course, I 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.

Location is Settled.

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 whether 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 independent 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 thereby became impossible of fulfillment. 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 has decided the route, and there is no alternative under existing legislation.

When in August it began to appear probable that the Colombian legislature would not ratify the treaty, it became incumbent upon me to consider well what the situation was, and to be ready to advise the congress as to what were the various alternatives of action open to us. There were several possibilities. One was that Colombia would at the last moment see the unwisdom of her position. That there might be nothing omitted, Secretary Hay, through the minister at Bogota, repeatedly warned Colombia that grave consequences might follow from her rejection of the treaty. Although it was a constantly diminishing chance, yet the possibility of ratification did not wholly pass away until the close of the session of the Colombian congress.

A second alternative was that by the close of the session on the last day of October, without the ratification of the treaty by Colombia, and without any steps taken by Panama, the American congress, on assembling early in November, would be confronted with a situation in which there had been a failure to come to terms as to building the canal along the Panama route, and yet there had not been a lapse of a reasonable time—using the word reasonable in any proper sense—such as would justify the administration going to the Nicaragua route. This situation seemed on the whole the most likely, and as a matter of fact I had made the original draft of my message to the congress with a view to its existence.

Panama Cuts Knot.

It was the opinion of eminent international jurists that in view of the fact that the great design of our guarantee under the treaty of 1846 was to dedicate the isthmus to the purposes of interoceanic transit, and above all to secure the construction of an interoceanic canal, Colombia could not under existing conditions refuse to enter into a proper arrangement with the United States to that end, without violating the spirit and substantially repudiating the obligations of a treaty the full benefits of which she had enjoyed for over fifty years. My intention was to consult the congress as to whether under such circumstances it would not be proper to announce that the canal was to be dug forthwith; that we would give the terms that we had offered and no others; and that if such terms were not agreed to we would enter into an arrangement with Panama direct, or take what other steps were needful in order to begin the enterprise.

A third possibility was that the people of the isthmus, who had formerly constituted an independent state, and who until recently were united to Colombia only by a loose tie of federal relationship might take the protection of their own vital interests into their own hands, reassert their former rights, declare their independence upon just grounds, and establish a government competent and willing to do its share in this great work for civilization. This third possibility is what actually occurred. Everyone knew that it was a possibility, but it was not until towards the end of October that it appeared to be an imminent probability. Although the administration, of course, had special means of knowledge, no such means were necessary in order to appreciate the possibility, and toward the end the likelihood, of such a revolutionary outbreak and of its success. It was a matter of common notoriety. Quotations from the daily papers could be indefinitely multiplied to show this state of affairs.

Revolution Was Brewing.

Quotations of this kind could be multiplied indemnitely. Suffice it to say that it was notorious that revolutionary trouble of a serious nature was impending upon the isthmus. But it was not necessary to rely exclusively upon such general means of information. On October 15 Commander Hubbard, of the navy, notified the Navy department that, though things were quiet on the isthmus, a revolution had broken out in the state of Cauca. On October 16, at the request of Lieutenant General Young, I saw Capt. C. B. Humphrey and Lieut. Grayson Mallet Prevost Murphy, who had just returned from a four months' tour through the southern portions of Venezuela and Colombia. They stopped in Panama on their return in the latter part of September. At the time they were sent down there had been no thought of their going to Panama, and their visit to the isthmus was but an unpremeditated incident in their return journey; nor had they been spoken to by anyone at Washington regarding the possibility of a revolt. Until they landed at Colon they had no knowledge that a revolution was impending, save what they had gained from the newspapers. What they saw in Panama so impressed them that they reported thereon to Lieutenant General Young, according to his memorandum—

"That while on the isthmus they became satisfied beyond question that, owing largely to the dissatisfaction because of the failure of Colombia to ratify the Hay-Herran treaty, a revolutionary party was in course of organization having for its object the separation of the state of Panama from Colombia, the leader being Dr. Richard Arango, a former governor of Panama; that when they were on the isthmus arms and ammunition were being smuggled into the country in Colon boxes, mining machine crates, etc., the small arms received being principally the Gras French rifle, the Remington and the Mauser; that nearly every citizen of Panama had some sort of rifle or gun in his possession, with ammunition therefor; that in the city of Panama there had been organized a fire brigade which was really intended for a revolutionary military organization; that there were representatives of the revolutionary organization at all important points on the isthmus; that in Panama, Colon and the other principal places of the isthmus police forces had been organized which were in reality revolutionary forces; that the people on the isthmus seemed to be unanimous in their sentiment against the Bogota government, and their disgust over the failure of that government to ratify the treaty providing for the construction of the canal and the consequent completion of the canal was such that a revolution might be expected immediately upon the adjournment of the Colombian congress without ratification of the treaty."

Lieutenant General Young regarded their report of such importance as to make it seem desirable that I should personally see these officers. They told me they had already reported to the lieutenant general, adding that on the isthmus the excitement was seething, and that the Colombian troops were reported to be disaffected. In response to a question as mine they informed me that if a revolution broke out on the isthmus the general belief that the revolution might break out at any moment, and if it did not happen before, would doubtless take place immediately after the closing of the Colombian congress (at the end of October) if the canal treaty were not ratified. They were certain that the revolution would occur, and before leaving the isthmus had made their own reckoning as to time, which they had set down as being probably from three to four weeks after their leaving. The reason they set this as the probable inside limit of time was that they reckoned that it would be at least three or four weeks—say not until October 26—before a sufficient quantity of arms and munitions would have been landed.

Takes Necessary Precautions.

In view of these facts I directed the Navy department to issue instructions such as would insure our having ships within easy reach of the isthmus in the event of need arising. Orders were given on October 19 to the Boston to proceed to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua; to the Dixie to prepare to sale from League Island; and to the Atlanta to proceed to Guantanamo. On October 30 the Nashville was ordered to proceed to Colon. On November 2 when, the Colombian congress having adjourned, it was evident that the outbreak was imminent, and when it was announced that both sides were making ready forces whose meeting would mean bloodshed and disorder, the Colombian troops having been embarked on vessels, the following instructions were sent to the commanders of the Boston, Nashville and Dixie:

"Maintain free and uninterrupted transit. If interruption is threatened by armed force, occupy the line of railroad. Prevent landing of any armed force with hostile intent, either government or insurgent, at any point within fifty miles of Panama. Government force reported approaching the Isthmus in vessels. Prevent their landing if, in your judgment, the landing would precipitate a conflict."

These orders were delivered in pursuance of the policy on which our government had repeatedly acted. The policy was exhibited in the following orders, given under somewhat similar circumstances last year and the year before and the year before that. The first two telegrams are from the Department of State to the consul at Panama:

"July 25, 1900.

"You are directed to protest against any act of hostility which may involve or imperil the safe and peaceful transit of persons or property across the Isthmus of Panama. The bombardment of Panama would have this effect, and the United States must insist upon the neutrality of the Isthmus as guaranteed by the treaty."

"November 20, 1901.

"Notify all parties molesting or interfering with free transit across the Isthmus that such interference must cease and that the United States will prevent the interruption of traffic upon the railroad. Consult with captain of the Iowa, who will be instructed to land marines, if necessary, for the protection of the railroad, in accordance with the treaty rights and obligations of the United States. Desirable to avoid bloodshed, if possible."

Instructions to Navy.

The next three telegrams are from and to the secretary of the navy:

"September 12, 1903—Ranger, Panama: United States guarantees perfect neutrality of isthmus and that a free transit from sea to sea be not interrupted or embarrassed. * * * Any transportation of troops which might contravene these provisions of treaty should not be sanctioned by you nor should use of road be permitted which might convert the line of transit into theater of hostility. MOODY."

"COLON, Sept. 30, 1903.—Secretary Navy, Washington: Everything is conceded. The United States guards and guarantees traffic and the line of transit. Today I permitted the exchange of Colombian troops from Panama to Colon, about 1,000 men each way, the troops without arms in train guarded by American naval force in the same manner as other passengers. Arms and ammunition in separate train, guarded also by naval force in the same manner as other freight. M'LEAN."

PANAMA, Oct. 3, 1903.—Secretary Navy, Washington, D. C.: Have sent this communication to the American consul at Panama: 'Inform governor while trains running under United States protection I must decline transportation any combatants, ammunition, arms, which might cause interruption, traffic or convert line of transit into theater hostilities.' CASEY."

On November 3 Commander Hubbard responded to the above quoted telegram of November 2, 1903, saying that before the telegram had been received 400 Colombian troops from Cartagena had landed at Colon; that there had been no revolution on the isthmus, but that the situation was most critical if the revolutionary leaders should act. On this same date the Associated Press in Washington received a bulletin stating that a revolutionary outbreak had occurred. When this was brought to the attention of the assistant secretary of state, Mr. Loomis, he prepared the following cablegram to the consul general at Panama and the consul at Colon:

"Uprising on isthmus reported. Keep department promptly and fully informed."

Before this telegram was sent, however, one was received from Consul Malmorras at Colon, running as follows:

"Revolution imminent. Government force on the isthmus about 500 men. Their official promised support revolution. Fire department, Panama, 400, are well organized and favor revolution. Government vessel Cartagena, with about 400 men, arrived early today with new commander in chief, Tobar. Was not expected until November 10. Tobar's arrival is not probable to stop revolution."

Reports the Uprising.

This cablegram was received at 2:35 p. m., and at 3:40 p. m. Mr. Loomis sent the telegram which he had already prepared to both Panama and Colon. Apparently, however, the consul-general at Panama had not received the information embodied in the Associated Press bulletin, upon which the assistant secretary of state based his dispatch; for his answer was that there was no uprising, although the situation was critical, this answer being received at 8:15 p. m. Immediately afterwards he sent another dispatch, which was received at 9:50 p. m., saying that the uprising had occurred, and had been successful, with no bloodshed. The gunboat Bogota, which the next day began to shell the city of Panama, with the result of killing one Chinaman. The consul-general was directed to notify her to stop firing. Meanwhile, on November 4, Commander Hubbard notified the department that he had landed a force to protect the lives and property of American citizens against the threats of the Colombian soldiery.

Before any step whatever had been taken by the United States troops to restore order, the commander of the newly landed Colombian troops had indulged in wanton and violent threats against American citizens, which created serious apprehension. As Commander Hubbard reported in his letter of November 5, this officer and his troops practically began war against the United States. Only the utmost forbearance and coolness of our officers and men prevented bloodshed. The letter of Commander Hubbard is of such interest that it deserves quotation in full, and runs as follows:

Colombian Act of War.

"U. S. S. Nashville, Third Rate, Colon, U. S. of Colombia, November 5, 1903.—Sir: Pending a complete report of the occurrences of the last three days in 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 11 o'clock in the forenoon of that day I summoned on shore by a preconcerted signal, and on landing met the United States consul, vice-consul, and Colonel Shaler, the general superintendent of the Panama railroad. The consul informed me that he had received notice from the officer commanding the Colombian troops, Colonel Torres, through the prefect of Colon, to the effect that if the Colombian officers, Generals 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 2 o'clock p. m., he, Torres, would open fire on the town 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 shed of the Panama Railroad company, a stone building susceptible of being put into good state for defense, and that I would immediately land such body of men, with their arms and ammunition, as the complement 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 1:30 p. m. the boats left the ship with a party of forty-two men under the command of Lieutenant 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. Meanwhile, and often took refuge on the German steamer Marcomania and Panama railroad steamer City of Washington, both ready to haul out from dock if necessary. The Nashville I got under way and patrolled with her along the water front close in and ready to use either small arms or 6-pounder battery. 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 3:15 p. m. Colonel Torres came into the building for an interview and expressed himself as most friendly to Americans, claiming that the whole affair was a misapprehension and that he would like to send the locals of Colon to Panama to see General Tobal and Amaya and thus direct the discontinuance of the show of force. A special train was furnished and safe conduct guaranteed. At about 5:30 p. m. Colonel 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 police until the return of the alcalde on the morning of the 5th. After an interview with the United States consul and Colonel Shaler as to the probability of good faith in the matter, I decided to accept the proposition and brought my men on board, 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 their 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 the following day. Lieutenant-Commander Witzel is entitled to much praise for his admirable work in command on the spot.

"I feel that I can not 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.

"Very respectfully,
"JOHN HUBBARD,
"Commander, U. S. Navy,
"Commanding."

In his letter of November 8 Commander Hubbard sets forth the facts more in detail.

Precaution None Too Soon.

His plain official account of the occurrences of November 4 shows 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 forty-two 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, bent on carrying out the atrocious 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 or sailors. At Colon, Commander Hubbard acted with entire impartiality towards both sides, preventing any movement, whether by Colombians or the Panamanians, which would tend to produce bloodshed. On November 9 he prevented a body of the revolutionists from landing at Colon. Throughout he behaved in the most creditable manner. In the New York Evening Post, under date of Panama, December 8, there is an article from a special correspondent, which sets forth in detail the unbearable oppression of the Colombian government in Panama. In this article is an interesting interview with a native Panamanian, which runs in part as follows:

* * * "We looked upon the building of the canal as a matter of life or death to us. We wanted that because it meant, with the United States in control of it, peace and prosperity for us. President Marroquin appointed an isthmian to be governor of Panama; and we looked upon that as of happy augury. Soon we heard that the canal treaty was not likely to be approved at Bogota; next we heard that our isthmian governor, Obaldia, who had scarcely assumed power, was to be superseded by a soldier from Bogota. * * *

"Notwithstanding all that Columbia has drained us of in the way of revenues, she did not bridge for us a single river, nor make a single roadway, nor erect a single college where our children could be educated, nor do anything at all to advance our industries. * * * Well, when the new generals came we seized them, arrested them, and the town of Panama was in joy. Not a protest was made, except the shots fired from the Colombian gunboat Bogota, which killed one Chinese lying in his bed. We were willing to encounter the Colombian troops at Colon and fight it out; but the commander of the United States cruiser Nashville forbade Superintendent Shaler to allow the railroad to transport troops for either party. That is our story."

Prevents a Conflict.

I call especial attention to the concluding portion of this interview which states the willingness of the Panama people to fight the Colombian troops and the refusal of Commander Hubbard to permit them to use the railroad and therefore to get into a position where the fight could take place. It thus clearly appears that the fact that there was no bloodshed on the isthmus was directly due—and only due—to the prompt and firm enforcement by the United States of its traditional policy. During the past forty years revolutions and attempts at revolution have succeeded one another with monotonous regularity on the isthmus, and again and again United States sailors and marines have been landed as they were landed in this instance and under similar instructions to protect the transit. One of these revolutions resulted in three years of warfare; and the aggregate of bloodshed and misery caused by them has been incalculable. The fact that in this last revolution not a life was lost, save that of the man killed by the shells of the Colombian gunboat, and no property destroyed, was due to the action which I have described. We, in effect, policed the isthmus in the interest of its inhabitants and of our own national needs, and for the good of the entire civilized world. Failure to act as the administration acted would have meant great waste of life, great suffering, great destruction of property; all of which was avoided by the firmness and prudence with which Commander Hubbard carried out his orders and prevented either party from attacking the other. Our action was for the peace both of Colombia and of Panama. It is earnestly to be hoped that there will be no unwise conduct on our part which may encourage Colombia to embark on a war which can not result in her regaining control of the isthmus, but which may cause much bloodshed and suffering.

Denies Collusive Knowledge.

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 my mentioning them is the fear lest unthinking persons might mistake for acquiescence the silence of 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 reads the newspapers and kept up a current acquaintance with public affairs.

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 chiefly sought to 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 from which it is deduced, the rule 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 embrace (1), our treaty rights; (2), our national interests and safety; and (3), the interests of collective civilization.

Design of the Treaty.

I have already adverted to the treaty of 1846, by the thirty-fifth article of which the United States secured the right to a free and open transit across the isthmus of Panama, and to that end agreed to guarantee to New Granada her rights of sovereignty and property over that territory. This article is sometimes discussed as if the latter guarantee constituted its sole object and bound the United States to protect the sovereignty of New Granada against domestic revolution. Nothing, however, could be more erroneous than this supposition. That our wise and patriotic ancestors, with their dread of entangling alliances, would have entered into a treaty with New Granada solely or even primarily for the purpose of enabling that remnant of the original Republic of Colombia, then resolved into the states of New Granada, Venezuela and Ecuador, to continue from Bogota to rule over the isthmus of Panama, is a conception that would in itself be incredible, even if the contrary did not clearly appear. It is true that since the treaty was made the United States has again and again been obliged forcibly to intervene for the preservation of order and the maintenance of an open transit, and that this intervention has usually operated to the advantage of the titular government of Colombia, but it is equally true that the United States in intervening, with or without Colombia's consent, for the protection of the transit, has disclaimed any duty to defend the Colombian government against domestic insurrection or against the erection of an independent government on the isthmus of Panama. The attacks against which the United States engaged to protect New Granadian sovereignty were those of foreign powers; but this engagement was only a means to the accomplishment of a yet more important end. The great design of the article was to assure the dedication of the isthmus to the purposes of free and unobstructed interoceanic transit, the consummation of which would be found in an interoceanic canal. To the accomplishment of this object the government of the United States had for years directed its diplomacy. It occupied a place in the instructions to our delegates to the Panama congress during the administration of John Quincy Adams. It formed the subject of a resolution of the senate in 1835, and of the house of representatives in 1839. In 1846 its importance had become still more apparent by reason of the Mexican war. If the treaty of 1846 did not in terms bind New Granada to grant reasonable concessions for the construction of means of interoceanic communication, it was only because it was not imagined that such concessions would ever be withheld. As it was expressly agreed that the United States, in consideration of its onerous guarantee of New Granadian sovereignty, should possess the right of free and open transit on any modes of communication that might be constructed, the obvious intent of the treaty rendered it unnecessary, if not superfluous, in terms to stipulate that permission for the construction of such modes of communication should not be denied.

Too Big for Private Enterprise.

Long before the conclusion of the Hay-Herran treaty the course of events had shown that a canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans must be built by the United States or not at all. Experience had demonstrated that private enterprise was utterly inadequate for the purpose; and a fixed policy, declared by the United States on many memorable occasions, and supported by the practically unanimous voice of American opinion, had rendered it morally impossible that the work should be undertaken by European powers, either singly or in combination. Such were the universally recognized conditions on which the legislation of the congress was based, and on which the late negotiations with Colombia were begun and concluded. Nevertheless, when the well-considered agreement was rejected by Colombia and the revolution on the isthmus ensued, one of Colombia's first act was to invoke the intervention of the United States; nor does her invitation appear to have been confined to this government alone. By a telegram from Mr. Beaupre, our minister at Bogota, of the 7th of November last, we were informed that General Reyes would soon leave Panama invested with full powers; that he had telegraphed the president of Mexico to ask the government of the United States and all countries represented at the Pan-American conference "to aid Colombia to preserve her integrity;" and that he had requested that the government of the United States should meanwhile "preserve the neutrality and transit of the isthmus" and should "not recognize the new government." In another telegram from Mr. Baupre, which was sent later in the day, this government was asked whether it would take action "to maintain Colombian right and sovereignty on the isthmus in accordance with article 35 (of) the treaty of 1846" in case the Colombian government should be "entirely unable to suppress the secession movement there." Here was a direct solicitation to the United States to intervene for the purpose of suppressing, contrary to the treaty of 1846 as this government has uniformly construed it, a new revolt against Colombia's authority brought about by her own refusal to permit the fulfillment of the great design for which that treaty was made. It was under these circumstances that the United States, instead of using its forces to destroy those who sought to make the engagements of the treaty a reality, recognized them as the proper custodians of the sovereignty of the isthmus.

Recognition is Justified.

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 realization of an interoceanic canal. Long acknowledged to be essential to our commercial development, it has become, as the result of a recent extension of our territorial dominion, more than ever essential to our national self-defense. In transmitting to the senate the treaty of 1846 President Polk pointed out as the principal reason for its ratification that the passage of the isthmus, which it was designed to secure, "would relieve us from a long and dangerous navigation of more than 9,000 miles around Cape Horn, and render our communication with our own possessions on the northwest coast of America comparatively easy and speedy." The events of the past five years have given to this consideration an importance immeasurably greater than it possessed in 1846. 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 vital necessity, which do not admit of indefinite delays.

To such delays the rejection by Colombia of the Hay-Herran treaty directly exposed us. As proof of this fact I need only refer to the program outlined in the report of the majority of the Panama canal committee, read in the Colombian Senate on October 14 last. In this report, which recommended that the discussion of a law to authorize the government to enter upon new negotiations should be indefinitely postponed, it is proposed that the consideration of the subject should be deferred till October 31, 1904, when the next Colombian Congress should have met in ordinary session. By that time, as the report goes on to say, "the extension of time granted to the New Panama Canal company by treaty in 1893 would have expired, and the new Congress would be in a position to take up the question whether the company had not, in spite of further extensions that had been granted by legislative acts, forfeited all its property and rights. "When that time arrives," the report significantly declares, "the republic, without any impediment, will be able to contract, and will be in more clear, more definite and more advantageous possession, both legally and materially." The naked meaning of this report is that Colombia proposed to wait until, by the enforcement of a forfeiture repugnant to the ideas of justice which obtain in every civilized nation, the property and rights of the New Panama Canal company could be confiscated.

Grab for Money.

Such is the scheme to which it was proposed that the United States should be invited to become a party. 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 claiming not merely 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 attempt, even apart from the indefinite delays to which the construction of the canal was to be subjected. On the first appearance of danger to Colombia, this government would have been summoned to intervene in order to give effect to the guaranties 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 interests, was fully 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.

In the third place, I confidently maintain

(Continued on Seventh Page.)

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