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THE PROTECTION OF NATIVE RACES

A STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY REV. DR. R. P. MACKAY, SECRETARY
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN CANADA, TO A JOINT MEETING OF THE COMMIT-
TEE OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL AND
ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE FOREIGN
MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF NORTH
AMERICA AT NEW YORK ON
23rd DECEMBER, 1913.

In September and October, 1909, articles appeared in "TRUTH" making grave charges against the Peruvian Amazon Company as to their treatment of Indians in the Putumayo District. These charges were so serious, that their publication led immediately to three separate investigations, the first by Sir Roger Casement, sent out by the British Foreign Office in July, 1910; the second by a Commission of Inquiry sent out by the Peruvian Amazon Company itself, in the same year, 1910; and the third by Dr. Romolo Paredes, sent out by the Peruvian Government in 1911. All three reports confirmed and established the charges made in "Truth," that outrageous atrocities were being committed against the Indians. The crimes charged included murder, torture, violation, constant floggings of a barbarous nature, and other acts of unspeakable cruelty. These charges were not cited as isolated instances of barbarities, but were, it was stated, parts of a regular system of administration.

It appears that the Peruvian Amazon Company was registered as a British Company in 1907, and that its Board consisted of eight members—three of them British, the others being Peruvian and French—and that the Peruvian Directors—Senor Arana and his friends, controlled 83% of the voting power.

The report states that "Insatiable desire to obtain the greatest production of rubber in the least time and with the least possible expense was the chief cause of crime. The Indians who did not comply with the requirements imposed, were tortured or killed outright, while stubborn ones were compelled with machete and bullet to fulfil the mandate of their masters. The greater the number of assassinations, the greater the production, which meant that the greater production was obtained over blood and dead bodies."

It appears that the territory of the Company in the Putumayo region, lying among the affluents of the Upper Amazon, comprises an area of from 10,000 to 12,000 square miles, and the defence of the British Directors was that they were ignorant of what was transpiring, that they had never visited

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