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SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA.

[October 17.]

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 2.

[A 6380/48/6]

No. 1.

Sir J. Tilley to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston.—(Received October 17.)

(No. 262.)

My Lord,

Rio de Janeiro, September 27, 1922.

I HAVE the honour to report that the British squadron, consisting of H.M.S. "Hood" and H.M.S. "Repulse," under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Cowan, entered Guanabara Bay on the 3rd September, and remained here until the 13th, when it left for Santos. The squadron left Santos on the 20th instant.

2. I believe that the impression made by its visit was great. In the first place it was obvious that the British ships were far superior to any others. It needed no expert eye to recognise that the "Hood" was not only bigger, but more beautiful than any other ship in the bay. At the naval review the President and members of the Brazilian Government, as well as the special Ambassadors, had every opportunity of drawing comparisons while they passed four times down the line. The admiral entertained many leading Brazilians; a ball was given on board, and on certain days the ships were open for inspection, so that everyone had a chance of admiring them.

3. At the military review the marching of the British contingent was generally admired, and admitted to be easily the best. General Caviglia observed to Dom Pedro of Braganza that they were the only men there who knew how to march.

4. Apart from this, both officers and men made themselves extremely popular, and their conduct was admirable and universally praised. All the more attention was called to it because of the trouble given by the American officers and men. Ten of their officers were arrested and imprisoned one night for riotous behaviour. They failed absolutely in society in comparison with ours; for instance, a large number forced their way into the ball given by Burgomaster Max, after being told that he was unable to give them invitations. His Excellency, who was standing by my wife when they arrived, supposed that he must receive them, but he said a good deal about the incident later. Their men were constantly seen drunk in the streets, and had some serious trouble.

5. What is regrettable is that this visit could not have taken place before instead of after the question of the naval mission was settled, although the Americans were probably too strongly entrenched in the Ministry of Marine to have been dislodged. Nevertheless, for our general prestige and the prestige of the navy, on which everything else ultimately depends, I believe that the visit has done great good.

I have, &c.

JOHN TILLEY.

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