

LATIN-AMERICAN CRITICISM OF UNCLE SAM

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OUR TRADE AND POLITICAL PRESTIGE suffered a rather serious loss because of the negligent manner in which we took our share of the Rio de Janeiro Exposition, it is alleged by various Latin-American journals which are sorry to note that North American trade expansion in countries of the Southern Continent, which began so promisingly during the World War, seems to have dwindled deplorably. These newspapers recall that when the conditions of war prevented South America from getting supplies from European providers, the United States seemed to be alive to the great new commercial opportunity that offered, but ever since the Armistice, it is said, South American buyers are gradually renewing their old business connections in spite of the efforts to drum up custom which are made by the few American chambers of commerce to be found below the Equator. These chambers of commerce, we are told, have great difficulty to persuade manufacturers in the United States to fashion their methods of sale and shipment in accordance with the peculiar needs of the twenty Latin-American republics, each having distinctive commercial and political characteristics and a population whose development and individuality are widely different. An interesting view of the subject appears in the *Revista de Comercio* of Paraguay, which finds the business methods and attitude of European commercial houses much to its preference.

This newspaper goes on to criticize Uncle Sam for not adapting his goods to the requirements of his South American customers, and explains:

"The American salesman invariably asserts that he can supply only standard goods such as are used in the United States; and he asserts that to manufacture goods just the way we want them would cost too much in money and time. On the other hand his European competitor makes a sale to the South American buyer, knowing well that his firm will fill the order exactly in accordance with the buyer's requirements, even if it means a shaving of the margin of profit."

On the subject of finance the *Tiempo* of Colombia reminds us that before the war London was the money-lending center for South America, and "during a century of independent life there was no question of England ever exacting from us the terms imposed to-day by American investors," but we are informed that:

"As long as the Americans require such internal political control as is customarily exacted in New York, unavoidable diplomatic difficulties are likely to arise and involve the abandonment of the pacific policies of Secretary Hughes. That is why his utterances at Rio were nothing more than empty words to us. All the expositions on earth will not wipe out existing conditions which will disappear only when the American people fully realize the injustice being done to nations able and willing to meet their foreign obligations."

More harsh words for Uncle Sam are found in some Brazilian journals, such as the *Jornal do Paiz*, which observes:

"While Brazil tries to imitate American business methods, has practically copied the American Constitution, and reluctantly acknowledges that America may have saved her from possible European conquest, there is a distinct feeling of suspicion among our lower classes as to America's disinterestedness when she assumes the big-brother rôle in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Furthermore such of our population as have a mixture of negro blood deeply resent the American attitude on the race question.

"Happenings like the negro massacre at Chicago in 1919 are still fresh in our minds; nor must we forget that at the time mentioned many in this country advocated a boycott on all American goods to serve as a protest and a warning to the United States."