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Lessons and prophecies of
the Third Pan-American
Conference: address delivered
by Mr. Joaquim
Nabuco, ambassador from
Brazil, before the
Liberal Club of
Buffalo, on February
20, 1907

Fundação Joaquim Nabuco

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LESSONS AND PROPHECIES OF THE THIRD PAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

GENTLEMEN:

You may be sure I fully realize what a distinction it is for me to be in the place where I find myself to-night, but I have read the names of those who have addressed you since your foundation and I can not help fearing the ordeal of having my name added to that list. I could not thank you enough for this great opportunity; it shows clearly enough your interest in the work of bringing together the American Republics. That looks to me as a hopeful sign. I take it as announcing that the only insurmountable obstacle to that work, which would be indifference on the part of this country, begins to give place to a different frame of mind. National indifference towards anything that resembles a foreign policy can be easily understood on your part; inter-state politics seems here as sufficient as inter-state trade; you are a world by yourselves, but even the Universe is interdependent, and now that, through repeated reflex movements, the political interdependence of our globe is more keenly felt everywhere, in England as in Japan, in Germany or France as much as in China or Persia, it is natural also that this Nation show signs of awaking to the consequences of her position in the American system. I am glad your great city is one of the first to acknowledge the importance of the new movement and that you called

upon me to speak on the lessons and prophecies of the third Panamerican conference.

MR. ROOT

As its President all I can tell you is that its surface was as smooth as possible, but your distinguished fellow citizen, Mr. Buchanan, the head of the American Delegation, who so ably and silently worked in the recess of the Committees, could tell you, I feel sure, that the depths were as still as the surface. To that quiet nothing has contributed more than the attitude of the Secretary of State, as the head of the Washington Pan-american Board, when the plans for the meeting were laid out, and than his personal visit to the seat of the Conference and to other South American capitals. Mr. Root was indeed the ideal representative this country could send on such a mission. His sincerity, his earnestness, his love of equity, his high-mindedness, his considerateness, together with his powerful intellect, and with what, in the broader geographical sense of the word, can be called his genuine Americanism, a most generous sympathy with all the nations of our Continent, could not fail to create among them an impression of confidence likely to last long after his passage. He went to us animated with the spirit of a Blaine, yet speaking the language of a Marshall. His words were received everywhere as political oracles, studied as constitutional lessons on the nature and the working of the institutions we all copied from you. With his presence our nations well realized that your Secretaries of State

are still cast on the same mould as in the times of the Jeffersons, the Monröes, the Websters and the Clays. That above all has assured the success of the Rio Conference.

UNITED AMERICA DELIBERATING IN COMMON

What chiefly characterized it was the friendly intercourse established between the great sections of our Continent, which seemed to meet at the two first Conferences under the sense of some danger to come from associating together. President Roosevelt's Message has already accentuated that difference, and this is the first lesson of the Rio meeting. We may feel sure that henceforth each new celebration of those American festivals will more and more develop the sentiment, the instinct, of continental confraternity. The repeated assembling of our nations will force them to exchange their views, to smooth away their mutual difficulties, to realize more vividly their natural kinship. The organ was created in advance of the feeling it was destined to evolve, but now it is evolving it. Mr. Root completed Mr. Blaine, he converted the dream into a reality. In every creation there is of necessity much that remains hidden. The founders are only beginners. Certainly in this case the statesmen who conceived it hardly imagined that the little Bureau devised at its origin only for the distribution of information on the progress of the American Republics was to become such a strong political bond between them. Yet the diplomatic Representatives of the American countries could not meet regularly every month in the State Department under the presidency of the Secretary of State

without feeling and imparting to the world the impression of a united America, deliberating in common. That impression will now necessarily increase a hundred fold with the magnificent gift of Mr. Carnegie, enabling us to raise in Washington a worthy abode for the permanent Council of the American nations. That cannot fail to impress all of them with a greater sense of the affinities that make already of all America in many respects a single political body.

PANAMERICANISM A CIVILIZING FORCE.

Well, and this is another of the lessons and prophecies of Panamericanism; however limited the responsibility of each associated nation, we could not form an international Union without being bound to greater mutual forbearance, to mutual peace, and without being more and more permeated by the influences which prove to be the noblest around each of us. I have a foreign friend now out of the Diplomatic Service who thought once of writing a book on Latin America to be called "The Revolutionary Continent." I do not know if he secured copyright for the title, but I think it would look now an antiquated one. It would not be 20th Century's history. The right of revolution looks more and more every day as reasonable a claim as that of a child who insisted for the absolute freedom of entering into convulsions. Revolution as a permanent state is a very different thing from revolutions incident to opposed evolution. The working together of the American Republics will give to the best elements they contain permanent ascendancy over the

revolutionary cells, which in order to survive need keeping up the fermentation. The remedy for the state of things which keeps revolution alive and in many cases would justify it, were it not incapable of creating order and liberty, is publicity and association, foreign capital and foreign immigration. For publicity and association, for foreign capital and immigration, the policy of Panamericanism is a most potent factor, so much so that Panamericanism can be pronounced the certain cure of the old evils among American Republics, as they all arose from seclusion and exclusiveness. No nation in the full tide of Panamericanism, wishing to join in all its extensions, to share its destinies, could grow in its blood the germs of such political cancers as revolution and tyranny. In that direction one may look forward with great confidence to the development of Panamericanism. I for myself see in it that Liberal League of the Continent, whose creation I always considered the only means of bringing all our countries to a same level of civilization and order. I thus echo here again with the most wishful hope the noble words of Mr. Root before the Rio Conference: "Let us unite in creating and maintaining and making effective an all-American public opinion, whose power shall influence international conduct and prevent international wrong, bring us ever nearer to the perfection of ordered liberty." That I believe is the soul of Panamericanism, its true and complete measure, when fully developed.

PANAMERICANISM AND INTERNECINE WARS.

I will point to one lesson and prophecy more, as in another respect also you can see the work that has been accomplished. Wars between American Republics lie already under a general interdict that makes at least the gratuitous ones impossible. Whenever a Government has the means to prevent two nations from running into war, if that action is disinterestedly exercised and if it does not create a moral wrong against one of the disputants, does not cripple her national destiny, the world always approves of the friendly offices being offered, of earnest pressure being applied, in the interest of peace, while within a short time both the casual would-be belligerents acknowledge their depth of gratitude to the party that avoided bloodshed. Panamericanism already has begun to remove from our Continent the danger of internecine war, as through the Monroe Doctrine it has averted for it, with one or two exceptions only, during nearly a hundred years the danger of conflicts with Europe.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

You asked me to speak of the lessons and prophecies of the recent Panamerican Conference, and I have put before you the brightest points I see in the future of our Union. I did not suggest the word *prophecies*; you chose it for me, perhaps, I am afraid, on the principle that old people see better at a distance. Dante in his poem makes those who saw much in advance of their time look and walk backwards. It is not only in after life that prophets pass

through that change, we see every day eminent men receding in the same retrograde manner from their bold prophecies ; but those who prophecy peace and good will among men, even if their present outlook proves false, need not fear having to look and to walk backwards in the road of human destiny. Still the future of Panamericanism, under its present voluntary, spontaneous, even effusive form, depends above all on the permanency of the spirit now ruling the governing sphere of this country ; that is a spirit of sympathy towards the other Republics, a sentiment which combines your national chivalrousness with your sense of continental kinship. No greater example of it could be pointed out than that of your sitting together with our Republics at a council where your vote is every day neutralized by one of theirs. I call that an ambition of building for the future on the most perfect level, of bringing about between us that highest kind of mutual good-will, which the greek philosopher so beautifully called *unanimity*, being of one mind.

ALL WASHINGTON'S CHILDREN.

Gentlemen, it is a commanding position that which you occupy in the world, but more than of the respect of the strongest you may feel proud of the confidence with which the nations of this Continent cluster around you. Last year I had the honor to speak at Grand Rapids, near the shore of another of your lakes, on Lincoln's day ; this time I was asked to address you on Washington's day. I regret that the date had to be changed, but any

day in your year is appropriate to place a great cause under Washington's patronage. No greater glory could be conceived than his of having resuscitated in the modern world the tradition of national rulers, magistrates, not masters, of the people which since the days of Cicero had entirely disappeared for nearly two thousand years. It is Washington who at the end of the XVIII Century opens the second Renaissance, that of freedom, and more fortunate than the great artists of the Italian Renaissance, who could not equal the masterpieces they copied, he surpassed his great models by making of modern liberty a much loftier structure than any that could be raised on the narrow foundations of ancient democracy. He thus became the founder of the modern political era; he breathed the spirit of freedom upon all our continent. In that respect we, the peoples of America, are all as much Washington's children as we are Columbus' children. These are the two figures that ought to stand in Washington at the entrance of our future Hall of American Peace, to keep clear in our minds the recollection of a common inheritance and the hope of a common destiny.

I rejoice, therefore, in seeing that you feel interested in the work President Roosevelt has committed to Mr. Root, and that you hail the future for which we are working together, in spite of receding indifference on one side and of defeated prejudices, here and there, on another. To that future I raise my glass hoping that all our nations will bring to the seeding of the new policy the heartiness necessary at this tentative period to insure its full growth throughout the American continent.