ENS..WSR..

Mérida, Yucatán,
February 11,1928.

My dear Mr. Rogers:

I append herewith sundry notes which will give you some idea of the first five or six days of my trip to Yucatán.

February 5th.

Traveling always seems to throw me into a comparative state of mind. The sense of being cast aloose from my moorings which comes from having broken the routine of settled existence gives me the feeling that I can pick and choose my perspectives and, Einstein-like, place in their cogredience planes of experience whose relativity I have either forgotten or have never been aware of before. In its simplest form all this only means that the present reality calls to mind some very obvious parallel in my past experience. For example- how like Galveston, or San Francisco, or any sea port any where, is the city of the True Cross? Mexican, of course, with its "plaza central", its pink and blue and yellow plastered houses, its flower choked patios glimpsed through half open doors, its persistent flies and beggars. And yet, at the same time, not wholly of the Mexican scene. These cheap water front hotels and saloons, bright with garish conviviality; these sun washed cobble stone streets filled with a mixture of mankind speaking a medly of tongues; these bare-footed sons of idleness lounging eternally along the docks and "looking lazy at the sea"-- all disclose the kinship of Vera Cruz to port towns the world over.

It takes almost 12 hours to drop the 424 kilometers and the 7,500 feet from Mexico City to Vera Cruz. You

start the long slide at 7 o'clock in the morning. At first the slope is very gradual- sometimes you even go up hill for a while- and then more and more the world is tilted. Suddenly, just after noon, the bottom drops out of everything and the train is left clinging to the side of the mountains, the engine digging in its heels to check the descent. Down, down, down,-valleys rushing to meet you, and thin threads of silver springing into full grown rivers. Now it is late afternoon. The world is flat again; flat and burnt and sandy- a long sloping plain and here at the end of the land, the beginning of the sea is Vera Cruz.

This business of dropping from cold to heat, from mountains to the sea, from temperate zone to the tropics- all in the course of one day is,quite literally, breath taking. My ears feel funny and so does my stomach.

It has often been said that you never really know your own country until you have spent some time in a foreign land. As I listened to the conversation of some fellow American travelers on the train today I was struck anew with the truth of this statement. There is something about the American voice which is reminiscent of the great open spaces and hog calling contests. I remember that William James, after a long stay in France, remarked something to this effect in one of his letters. Now after six months in Mexico I understand what he meant. Heaven knows that the Mexicans are not all posessed of the soft, dulcent tones which are traditionally associated with Latin races; but at least they don't rumble like fog horns.

"Yes, Sir", said the elderly, retired American business man behind me, " I gave my boy the best education that money could buy. And I don't regret it neither. Now he's got a job with the Eastman Kodak Company- one of their junior executives. Yes, Sir, he's well educated. I mean he knows all about the split infinitive and things like that....."

"A week in Mexico was too much for me".(Now it is his new found American friend who speaks). " I just came down to look around and I tell you I would'nt touch this country with a pointed stick. The people are nice. You know what I mean- nice. But it's these damned politicians that are ruining the country. And ignorant too- I mean the people. Why I asked one of them where Maximilliani's (sic) palace was and he did'nt know what I was talking about. One hell of a country that's what I say..."

Twelve hours of this booming in your ears is much to much.

February 6th.

I now have a very great and lasting respect for the ritual of getting on boats in Mexico. For some curious reason (or lack of it- one never knows which in Mexico) it is the law: (a). that no one is allowed to take passage on any boat running between Mexican ports (unless they are boats belonging to the Mexican National lines) without special permission from the Federal government;(b). everyone getting on a boat is technically an emigrant and must therefore have a permit from the emigration officials; and (c) that all baggage must be inspected by the customs officers before and after boarding the ship (even though the passanger is only going to another Mexican port). Write it down, therefore, that February 6th, 1928, was spent in getting permits, to get permits, to get permits.

Tonight finds us, at last, comfortably settled on the Ward Line Boat- Monterey, destination, Progreso, Yucatán. We have met the Captain, tipped the room steward, made friends with the fat Mexican lady in the adjoining deck chair, leaned on the railing and spit into the sea, walked four times around the deck, and in general done all those things which it is right and proper to do on boats.

February 7th.

Absolutely exhausted from sitting all day in a deck chair and eating three enormous meals.

February 8th.

After being awakened at 6 o'clock this morning in order to prepare for the inspection of the Mexican emigration officials (just how one did this we were never able to discover) we were finally allowed to disembark at noon. The harbor here is very shallow and large boats like the Monterey have to stand off about four miles while the passengers are conveyed to land on a tug.

Of Progreso perhaps the less said the better. It is a place where boats stop and hennequen is shipped.

My letter to the American Consul was duly presented and a long conference with him provided me with much valuable information. I was especially happy to get the names of a Mr. Lent and a Mr. Rice who,as the buyers for the International Harvester Company and the H.W. Peabody Company, are the dominating factors in the sisal industry.

A short drive of 32 kilometers across the flat coastal plains brought us to the capital of the state of Yucatán, Mérida. We arrived too late to do much more than find a hotel,

but already I can see that this is by far the most attractive town which I have visited in Mexico.

February 8th.

My first impressions of Mérida have been confirmed. Charming is the only word to describe the place. Like all Mexican towns it is centered around a great plaza located in the heart of the city. Here are the chief business houses, the cathedral, and the "Palacio Nacional". Immense laurel trees furnish ample shade for the broad walks and the attractively fashioned stone and iron benches. I have said that the plaza is in the heart of the city; it would be more accurate to say that it is the heart of the city. Even in a town as large as Mérida (the population is about 70,000) the central square is still the place where the "gente" high and low gather of an evening to listen to the excellent music of the state band, to take their daily constitutional by walking round and round the "paseo", or simply to sit and let the gentle Gulf breezes fan their hair. In the daytime the plaza is everybody's outdoor office and meeting place. In the plaza the threads of activity cross and recross and here is woven the pattern of social and business life of the town.

Mérida was founded in 1548. The streets, following the usual Spanish pattern of that time, are, therefore, so narrow as to be little more than alleys. Their narrowness plus the fact that the custom of building all houses flush with the sidewalk makes practically every corner a "blind" crossing, inevitably creates a rather serious problem for automobile traffic. In Mérida this problem is further complicated by the some 400 horse drawn"sea going hacks" which continue to ply their ancient trade wholly undaunted by more modern means of transportation.

Mérida requires almost as many traffic cops as would a city twice its size in the United States.

But the most outstanding characteristic of the capital city of Yucatán is its cleanliness and its orderliness. Not only are the streets, the plazas,the markets, and the parks (of which, by the way, there are sixteen scattered through the town) spotlessly clean, but the people themselves in their personal appearance give unmistakable evidence of daily traffic with bathtubs. Indeed,from ancient times the Yucatecans have been famous for their personal cleanliness and it is said that the early Spanish missionaries were very much concerned and somewhat non-plused by a people who insisted on washing themselves two or three times a day. Apparently the custom persists and, like the Englishmen in Rupert Brooke's poem, they continue to "bathe by day.. and bathe by night"....

This morning I was received by the governor of the state, Dr. Torre Díaz. He proved to be a very fat and very pleasant person. After I had explained the nature of my work, he very promptly gave me an open letter to the heads of the various governmental departments requesting them to furnish me with whatever information I might need. In addition to this he presented me with a pass on the railroad for my proposed visit to the Mayan ruins at Chichén Itzá.

February 9th.

Things are beginning to fall into shape now. This forenoon I had a talk with Mr. Rice, the buyer for H.W.Peabody and Company, and also one with a Señor Luis Monroy, editor of the magazine "Sisal Mexicana" (official publication of the "Henequeneros de Yucatán", a co-operative association of sisal growers).

I am now reading through the literature which I gathered from these sources. In my next letter I will, if everything goes well, be able to send you an article on the hennequen industry.

Keith and I have been invited this afternoon to the Country Club by Mr.Rice. Monday we go to Chichén Itzá.

Sincerely yours,

P.S. Unfortunately I have forgotten the number of my last letter, hence the blank space in the upper left hand corner.

ENS..WSR..

Mérida, Yucatán,
Feb.20,1928.

My dear Mr. Rogers:

You, my dear Sir, have in all probability never slept in a hammock and therefore can have no proper idea of what a delightful and complicated art this can be. I, on the other hand, am now a finished and I may even say an accomplished hammock sleeper. And this is only another way of saying that I have been initiated into one of the most important mysteries of Yucatecan life....But let me begin at the beginning of this story.

"Monday we go to Chichén Itzá to see the Mayan ruins" I said in my last letter. When I wrote these words, however, I had only the vaguest notion of what"going to Chichén Itzá" would involve. I do not want to suggest that anything very strange or marvellous happened, but simply that the trip was replete with those minor novelties which give this part of the country such a different flavor from the rest of the Mexican Republic. And that it <u>is</u> different even the most casual observor will see at once. The people here look different, dress different, think different, and have different customs and modes of life from the Mexicans of the mesa regions. Take this matter of hammocks, for example. The night before our departure for Chichén I bethought myself that it might be a good idea to talk over my preparations with the manager of this funny little hotel in which we are stopping.

"What! no hammocks? , said this gentleman in the same surprised tone in which that famous phrase "what, no soap!" must have first been uttered.

"And must one have hammocks to go to Chichén Itzá?" , said I in much the same tone.

"Be assured", replied the Señor Dueno of the hotel, "that no Yucatecan would any more think of traveling without his hammock than he would without his pants"- or words to that effect. He then proceeded to explain to me that it was not the custom of the country in Yucatán (outside of the capital city, Mérida) for hotels or inns to supply their guests with beds. A nights lodging consists of a room whose most prominent furnishings are two stout hooks in the opposite walls. Woe and a cold tile floor for a bed awaits the unwary traveler who does not carry his own hammock and blankets.

I will have to admit that this information made both Keith and myself rather unhappy. We had visions of those rather stiff, sticky, hot affairs which we remembered as gracing summer front porches in Texas. Our misgivings we soon discovered, however, when the hotel manager brought out two native hammocks which he had agreed to lend us, were premature. The Yucatecan hammock, unlike the Seares Roebuck variety in the United States, is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. They are woven by hand from the native sisal fibre (I saw them being made at the state pennitentiary). Counting in the cords at the ends they measure about 14 feet in length and when spraad out are often more than six feet wide. One of ordinary size and grade can be bought for about 40 pesos; the larger and finer ones, including an especially colorful and resplendent variety known as "hamacas matrimoniales" (bridal hammocks), sell for as much as 100 pesos. The only trick necessary to learn in order to

sleep quite as comfortably in the "hamaca" as in an ordinary bed is that lying diagonally across ~~them~~ it.

The train for Chichén, as, of course, anyone would know who had had any previous experience with the curious ways of Mexican trains, departs at the ungracious hour of 5:30 A.M. A long dusty ride through miles and miles of dry, flat brush land and hennequen fields, the latter looking for all the world like gigantic pin cushions, brings you in some four hours to the little village of Dzitás far in the interior of the northwestern part of the state. Here we presented our letter of introduction (previously given me by the Governor) to the mayor of the town and started our negotiations for a means of conveyance to Chichén which is all of fifteen miles off the railroad in the brush. It was beastly hot and poor Keith suffering from a disordered stomach and an overdose of Mr. Enos' Fruit Salts, was exceedinly unhappy in any but a horizontal position. So, while to the mild amazement of the natives she stretched out on a bench in the meager shade of the plaza, I hastened to conclude the arrangements for transportation. Which is to say, that by the end of two hours and a half, much bowing and exchanging of pleasantries, and two glasses of beer at the home of the mayor, I managed to charter a delapidated "Fordcito" for the sum of ten pesos.

Roughly speaking the road was good and the "Fordcito" by the grace of god and the Virgin Mary succeeded in reaching Chichén with only one puncture on the way. We had been previously informed that the only accommodations for travellers at the ruins were those offered at the home of one Doña Victoria. As a matter of fact, with the exception of the Carnegie Institute buildings and a few little sheds used to house some of the Mexican

archaeologists, Doña Victoria proved to be the owner of the only house at the site. We were, accordingly, very happy to be shown by this fat Mayan lady into a little bare room innocent of all furniture except a home made bench and table and the all - important aforementioned hammock hooks. It is true that the good landlady's pigs, dogs, and chickens displayed a persistent disposition to wander in and out of the room, but in spite of this the place was reasonably clean. In response to our request for a bath a five gallon oil can of water was brought in and we were soon as happy as if we had been in a Ritz hotel- well, almost so anyway.

After a little while a Miss Mc Kay, (the official hostess for the Carnegie crowd with whom Keith had made friends in Mexico City) put in her appearance and invited us for tea to the large hacienda where most of the group working on the ruins is housed. In all there are now sixteen members of the staff- archaeologists, artists, photographers, secretaries etc. One of the staff, a young chap named Paul Martin, I had known as a student at the University of Chicago. After a shameless number of cups of tea, we wandered back to our little "jacal" and by 6:30 were safely stowed away in our hammocks for the night.

The next morning after an hour or so spent with Martin while he explained to me the technique of reconstructing Mayan temples, I was informed by Morley's secretary that he would be pleased to receive me in his study. Before leaving Merida I had heard various tales to the effect that the Carnegie crowd was not disposed to be very hospitable to American visitors- especially those who wished to take phtotgraphs or publish articles

about the work under way. Although I had no desire to do either of these things, I was, nevertheless, a little doubtful about how I should be received. However, thanks, I suspect, to the good offices of Martin and Miss Mc Kay, Morley was not only very pleasant,but for an hour and a half proceeded to deliver a lecture for my private benefit which might have been entitled"Morley on Mexico". For the sake of the record and in order to give you some picture of the man I herewith transcribe some of my notes on the conversation.

"Morley first came to Mexico in 1907. Since then he has traveled over most of the country and is especially familiar with the peninsular and the Central American regions. During the war he was advisor to the Navy Department for Central American countries. For the last five years he has been director of the "Chichén Itzá Project' for the Carnegie Foundation. He is probably the foremost living authority on the deciphering of Mayan hieroglyphics. It is said that the Carnegie Foundation is spending $40,000.00 a year on the study and reconstruction of the Mayan ruins at Chichén Itzá. The work is being done under the terms of a special agreement with the government of Mexico with the understanding that none of the 'discoveries' are to be taken out of the country. The members of the Carnegie staff are given free passes on the state railroads of Yucatan and no freight charges are made for supplies or working materials.

Although Morley was very willing to talk on any and everything connected with Mexico, his remarks were more dogmatic than logical and oftimes he would contradict himself twice in the same paragraph. For example: in response to my

'Have your studies of the ancient Mayan civilization led you to believe that the race, given an opportunity, could again develop a high level of culture?' he replied quite positively in the affirmative. A few minutes later, however, he was saying ' the Indians here are naturally a lazy,inferior race'; and ' you can't be kind to these Indians- they will take it for a sign of weakness; you have got to be fair, but at the same time show them that you are boss... this is the only kind of treatment they under stand'.

"In international relations Morley is avowedly an 'imperialist and a conservative'. 'The trouble with Mexico is what old Dewey said- it's too damned contiguous. The job for the United States is to keep the lid on. If these latin nations won't maintain peace then we ought to intervene. But we are too damned hypocritical. Why don't we come right out and admit that we yield the big stick and intend to keep on doing so. That's the sort of thing these people could grasp.... Good old Sheffield was right about the duty of the American nation to protect its citizens. He was one of the best Ambassadors that we have ever had and the reason that Morrow is having such an easy time of it is because Sheffield put the fear of God into the Mexicans and would'nt give in an inch'."

Note: Mr. Morley is a rather undersized man who has been in ill health for a number of years suffering from the after effects of a bad case of dysentery...

It is not my purpose here to add one more description to the already numerous literature on the ruins. Sufficient it is to say that it is well worth any one's time and trouble to have a look at them. Personally, I think that for the most

part the time and money spent on archaeological research is out of all proportion to the value of the returns received. It is surprising, however, how the actual sight of these last vestiges of an ancient civilization snatched by the scientist almost at the last moment from complete anihilation by the brush and the jungle, can stimulate and give wings to the imagination. One walks in the last twilight of this dead city awed and amazed. These grotesque, powerful wall paintings; these gigantic snakes hewn with infinite patience from the raw stone; these tremendous mounds of rock and stone wrenched from the protesting earth and thrown against the sky, lifting their jewel like little temples in grandeur ~~upon~~ above the ruck of the jungle and setting them as lights upon a hill.... what a people! what a people!

My investigation of the sisal industry has been somewhat hampered this week due to the fact that every man,woman and child here in Mérida has been busy with the great event of the year- the annual carnival. For three days practically all the offices have been closed and business has been at a standstill. The people spend their nights in dancing and their days in riding up and down the narrow streets in automobiles, dressed in fancy costumes, yelling at the top of their voices, and dousing each other with confetti. We have attended several of the dances. Those of the lower middle class- the so-called "mestizo" dances- have been particularly interesting. The men in their bare feet and sandals and their gleaming white duck suits and the women in their loose white native dresses (they look like night gowns) set off with yards of colored embroidery and coral and gold rosaries, make an unforgetable picture.

This week, now that the carnival is over, I

will gather the rest of the materials for my article on sisal and one on the very interesting and powerful labor party here known as the "Liga de Resistencia del Partido Socialista de Yucatán". We also plan to make another excursion into the countryto see some more of the life in the villages in the interior and something of the ruins at Uxmal.

Very sincerely yours,

ENS

Vida Social

Distinguido viajero.—Está en Mérida, y hemos tenido el gusto de saludarlo, el ilustrado joven universitario norteamericano Dr. Eyler N. Simpson, quien visita la República Mexicana en jira de estudio, especialmente sobre problemas económicos y sociales.

Ayer nos dispensó el honor de su visita, introducido por nuestro culto compañero en la prensa don Rafael Heliodoro Valle, de quien nos traje amable misiva.

Grata permanencia deseamos en Yucatán al Dr. Simpson.

WSR..MS...

February 29,1928

Dear Eyler:

For several reasons I can not now leave here. Do not let the prospect of my coming later in any way interfere with the regular course of your work. As soon as I find it possible to go to Mexico I will telegraph you so that a time can be agreed upon satisfactory to you.

Your sundry notes, sent under date of February 11th, provided amusing reading. I am, however, a little hazy as to what the trip is all about. Trips without concrete objective get on my nerves.

A fortnight ago I received a cable from Bruce to the effect that he was back in Moscow after a trip to the "Arctics". Other than for his own amusement, I can not conceive of any reason for his making such an expedition. This, along with other things, has led me to cable him to come out of Russia immediately for a consultation with John.

Bruce's failure to concentrate on a few definite problems of immediate importance means that we are missing a wonderful opportunity at this end. Because of abundance of money here, because of a slowing up of business, and perhaps for other less obvious reasons, American banking and industrial leaders are now greedily seeking information about Russia. They raise a very practical question: Can we do business with Russia at a profit? If so, how? Unfortunately, I do not think Bruce is competent to give a trustworthy answer.

I like the fact that you promptly visited the governor and got on well with him. Always try to ascertain who the worthwhile people are and get to them quickly. When you are back in Mexico City, drop me little notes of appreciation to the people who have been helpful. Six months later, find some excuse for writing them.

Dr. Ruml passed the illustrated edition of your report about among officials of the various Rockefeller foundations. He has now returned it. Over the 'phone he tells me that every one was impressed.

My regards to you and Keith.

WSR/FC

Sincerely,

ENS..WSR..30.

Mexico City,D.F.,
Apartado 538,
March 5,1928.

My dear Mr. Rogers:

In my letter No. 25, page 6, paragraphs 1 and 2, I tried to state in the clearest manner possible the concrete objectives of my trip to Yucatan. These were, as you will perhaps recall, four in number: (1) to study the sisal (henequen) and chicle industries; (2) to examine the agrarian movement in Yucatan as a case study in my larger study of the land problem in Mexico; (3) to become acquainted with a different variety of Mexico's Indian population and to study the archaeological work being done by the Carnegie foundation at Chichén Itzá; and (4) to know at first hand the geography and climate of the tropical coastal regions of Mexico. This was what, with your approval, I planned to do in Yucatan.

During the 20 days of my stay in Yucatan I actually did: (1) by numerous conferences with state officials, directors of the cooperative producers association, local representatives of the International Harvester Co. and the H.W. Peabody Co.,buyers for the American Chicle Co., and the Wrigley Co., and the United States Vice-Consul; by the collection of histories, official reports, documents, and statistics of all sorts; by visits to various henequen plantations, etc. etc. - to the best of my ability learn what there was to know about the henequen and chicle industries; (2) by interviews with the state officials and with the president of the Socialist Party gather data and impressions concerning the present agrarian situation

in Yucatan and the role in the economic life of the state played by the socialist party; (3) by two trips- one to Chichén Itzá and one to Uxmal- and an interview with Morley become acquainted with the nature and progress of the archaeological investigations in Yucatan; and (4) by traveling over the greater part of the state of Yucatan both by train and on horseback receive definite first hand impressions of the geography and climate of this part of Mexico.

I need hardly say that to do all this in 20 days (five of which were more or less wasted due to the preoccupation of the people with their annual carnival) kept me very busy. So busy, in fact, that I was able to do little more than gather my materials while I was in Yucatan. Now that I am back in Mexico City I am hard at work digesting these materials and writing them up. Enclosed you will find a memorandum on chicle. By the first part of next week I hope to be able to finish my report on henequen. By the end of next week I plan to finish my memorandum on the activities of the socialist party in Yucatan.

I trust that this statement will absolve me from the suspicion that my trip was lacking in "concrete objectives" and at the same time clear up ~~in~~ any doubt in your mind concerning what I was about. My letters No. 28 and 29 which I wrote while in Yucatan were meant to be nothing more or less than what you found them to be- "amusing reading" and a way of letting you know that I was there and busy. It is fair to raise the question whether or no the type of report represented by these letters is worth the time and trouble required in the writing. I have been proceeding on the theory that such letters may have

a definite (though, albeit, a relatively slight) value in so far as they serve to fill in the background and exhibit the ups and downs of life and travel in modern Mexico. However, I may well be mistaken in this matter and I await your judgement as a guide for the future.

What I have written above may appear unnecessarily explicit, but I assure you that this is not my intention. If I labor the point overmuch it is because I sweat so much blood in trying to make my every move here show definite concrete results for the Institute- especially when I feel that it is necessary to do something that calls for an extra outlay of funds- that when I fail to make my plans clear or to justify my expenditures in your eyes I am exceedingly unhappy and chargrined.

When I returned to Mexico City I found Mr. Gilson Gardner's letter of introduction from you awaiting me at the post office. I looked him up at once and was very sorry to discover that he was planning to leave for the States within two days. However, I managed to get in a few hours talk with him and even arranged to have both Mr.and Mrs.Gardner out to the house for tea. Since you have known the gentleman for a number of years I need not tell you that his unpretentious manner, his slow, careful way of talking, and his vast fund of experience make him an altogether charming person. He seemed to be very interested in my work and in the Institute and I rather suspect that he will give you a full report on the former the next time he sees you.

Before he left, Mr. Gardner was kind enough to introduce me to Walter Lippmann who is here at the present time. Lippmann seems to know you and the Institute. In view of the fact that the Mexican government has turned the town over to him and given him every opportunity to get the "dope" I am going to

avail myself of his invitation to see him again. It may be a good chance to advertise the Institute to the "World" and perhaps pave the way to a market later on for some of my stuff.

Following your suggestion I will go ahead with my work without reference to your proposed visit to Mexico. I have not seen Mr. Saenz since my return about the trip across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. I may or may not go depending on how I get along with the work that I now have under way. Meanwhile, as soon as I can finish my special studies on Yucatan I will turn again to the agrarian problem.

I have received notice that the subscriptions which you took out for me some time back to the New York Times and Harpers Magazine have expired. Both of these publications have been helpful to me in my work and I would like to ask that my subscription to them (as well as the other publications which I previously requested) be continued for at least another six months.

I am, with best regards

Sincerely yours,

WSR.

Memorandum on Chicle Industry In Mexico.

Economic Importance.

The estimates of the amount of raw chicle produced in the peninsula of Yucatan (that is- in the territory of Quintana Roo and the states of Campeche and Yucatan) for the year 1927 vary between 8,000,000 and 10,000,000 pounds. The average selling price for chicle during the past five years has been 43 ¢ (Amer. Gold) a pound. The value of the crop for the year 1927 was, therefore, somewhere between $3,640,000 and $4,300,000 (Amer.Gold). The greater part of this production was shippped through the ports of Campeche and Progreso in the states of Campeche and Yucatan respectively. Accurate figures of production are impossible to obtain due to the fact that large quanitites of chicle are smuggled each year into British Honduras and shipped through the port of Belize in order to escape the heavy taxes levied by the Mexican government.

The latest official statistics published by the Mexican government give the production of chicle for the years 1920 to 1925 as follows:

Production Statistics-Chicle-1920-1925.

Year	Amount in Kilos.
1920	2,922,725
1921	2,152,583
1922	3,114,625
1923	3,217,513
1924	3,070,237
1925	4,874,700

(To reduce kilos to pounds multiply by 2.2.;to reduce to metric tons divide by 1000.)

The latest official statistics published by the Mexican

government for the value and the amount of chicle exported for the years 1920 to 1926 are:

Exportation Statistics-Chicle-1920-1926.

Year	Amount in Kilos	Value in Pesos.
1920	2,865,417	7,298,791
1921	2,110,376	4,200,861
1922	3,101,398	5,562,138
1923	3,154,425	5,493,630
1924	1,872,697	3,138,752
1925	4,412,774	7,895,516
1926	4,548,997	8,636,699

Taxes on Chicle Industry.

The Mexican federal,state, and municipal governments by the imposition of various kinds of taxes derive a very considerable income each year from the chicle industry. The federal government alone in the year 1927 gained 1,552,703 pesos from taxes and duties on chicle.

The most important taxes and duties imposed by the federal government on chicle are:

80 pesos "concession tax" on each 1000 hectareas (c.2,500 acres) of public land.
55 pesos net ton (2,200 lbs) "exploitation tax".
224 pesos per metric ton exportation tax (i.e. 20 centavos per kilo plus 10% plus 2% or .224 centavos a kilo).

In addition to these federal taxes there are state and municipal taxes which vary in amount from place to place. For example, the territory of Quintana Roo imposes a tax of 5% ad valorem on each "quintal" (46 kilos) of chicle produced in the territory. If this same chicle is shipped through the port of Progreso,and hence through the state of Yucatan, additional taxes must be paid to the cities of Valladolid and Merida.

In view of the fact that practically all of Mexican chicle is sold to the United States it is also important to note that the United States government charges an import duty of 10¢

(Amer.Gold.) per pound on raw chicle.

History and Sources of Chicle.

The following statement is quoted from a report by Joseph W. Vander Laan published by the United States Department of Commerce under the title, "Production of Gutta-Percha,Balata,Chicle and Allied Gums".

"Chicle, the commodity used in the manufacture of chewing gum, came originally from Southern Mexico, British Honduras, and Guatemala only. While its chief source is still this region, large quantitites of substances, different in composition from the original product but used as an ingredient in its manufacture, reach the consuming markets from the Middle Eastern Tropics, from Venezuela and the Guianas, from northeastern Colombia, and from the Amazon valley.

"The original chicle is the latex product of one, and perhaps more, species of the genus Achras (Sapotaceae) . Wild forms of Achras zapota , a plant widely cultivated in nearly all tropical countries for its fruit and having many common names- among which are nispero (general Spanish-American name), sapodilla (British West Indies), and zapote chico (Mexico and the Philippine Islands)- is supposed to be the botanical source of the best grades of chicle...

"Next to the original chicle, the principal substitute is jelutong (one or more species of Dyera, family Apocynaceae), which reaches the markets mainly from Singapore. It is reported that fully 80 per cent of the imports of this product into the United States were consumed by the chewing-gum manufacturers.

"In the Orinoco district of Venezuela the chicle known locally as pendare is provisionally classed as a species of Mimusops

(Sapotaceae).

"The chicle that comes from Colombia has its origin principally in the Atrato and San Juan regions, Quibdo being the collecting center and Cartagena the port of shipment. The commodity is locally known as lirio and the tree that produces it is Couma (Apocynaceae).

"Small quantitites of chicle have been shipped from Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras, British and Dutch Guiana, and the Amazon region. The exact botanical source of the product from these countries is unknown."

Those engaged in the chicle trade in Mexico say that there are about 60 varieties of plants which produce gums which can be manufactured into chewing-gum. Only one of these plants, however,- the "zapote" tree- produces a type of gum which is considered the "best" grade. All other varieties of gum they are disposed to regard as "substitutes".

Methods of Production and Labor Conditions.

The "zapote" or zapodilla tree from which chicle is derived grows wild usually in mahogany forests and in conjunction with numerous other species of trees. The following statement appears in the above mentioned report.

"The zapodilla often reaches a height of 30 to 40 feet and a diameter of 35 to 40 inches and yields a fruit known locally as zapodilla plum, at one time sold in large quantitites in Mexico; but in recent years, owing to overtapping of the trees for latex, the fruits have diminished in size and become inedible, and this trade has almost disappeared in consequence. The tree also furnishes a hard red timber used in cabinet making and for other purposes.

"The chicle is collected by tapping. Cuts are made with a machete in a zigzag line from the base up to the first branches, usually with a perpendicular channel connecting all the incisions. After the first tapping the zapodilla tree is left alone for at least a year, and often for a number of years. If the cuts are too deep, the tree may die, but under proper supervision it should be possible to tap the same tree over and over again in a regular rotation of a few years. [According to those engaged in the chicle trade in Mexico it takes on an average from 20 to 25 years for the Mexican variety of tree to start producing gum. The tree can then be tapped once every five years for a period of about 25 years- i.e. five times.] The amount of moisture in the atmosphere has a marked effect upon chicle production. When moisture is abundant the sap flows freely, but when dry weather prevails the result is the opposite.

"The amount of chicle produced per tree varies according to the size of the tree, the species, the locality, and probably also according to the time of tapping. The yield per tree ranges from 2 to 6 pounds of good chicle. The maximum yield of a single tree in British Honduras is reported to be 25 pounds, while a record for one tree in Mexico is said to be 61 pounds. With conservative tapping the yield per tree will probably not exceed 2 to 4 pounds. A chiclero can collect and prepare from 250 to 300 pounds of chicle per month.

" The latex is at first thin and white but rapidly thickens and turns yellow and sticky. After the latex ceases to flow it is collected and brought to camp where it is heated until a test piece withdrawn from the kettle sets hard on cooling, then cooled somewhat and kneaded into a uniform product in the

form of blocks weighing from 5 to 50 pounds each."

Up to the present time all attempts to domesticate or to cultivate the zapodilla tree systematically on plantations have proved economically unprofitable. The reason for this is not difficult to understand when one considers that a tree which takes anywhere from 20 to 25 years to mature can then only be tapped about five times with an average total yield of from 2 to 6 pounds. It is known that there are still large areas in Southern Mexico which are yet unexploited or not fully exploited. According to one authority " it is conceivable that should more conservative methods of tapping the wild trees and forest management methods be adopted in the existing true chicle forests, supplies of this commodity might meet the future demands indefinitely." It is reported, however, that certain chicle manufacturers are already considering plantation projects to insure future needs.

The usual proceedure followed by a company engaged in extracting raw chicle in Mexico is first to obtain from the federal government a concession to exploit a relatively large and more or less clearly defined area. (American interests control large areas in Quintana Roo and Campeche, some concessions extending 75 to 100 miles in breadth by 120 to 150 miles in length.) Next, at the beginning of the season (the season lasts about 7 months- from July to February) the company must advance money or working capital to a number of local contractors. The contractors, in turn, must use this money to buy mules, food, tools and other equipment, and to advance a certain per cent of the wages to the workers or "chicleros" in order to get the latter to agree to go into the "brush". The company must be in a position to risk a very considerably amount of money in this fashion. It is said that the Wrigley Co.,for example, advances each year

about $1,000,000 or approximately 35% of the total yearly amount expended in the purchase of Mexican chicle. Incidentally, it should be noted that this system of advances involves one of the greatest hazards in the industry. It is not unusual for either the workers or the contractors or both to decamp with advance money. One company last year had over a hundred men disappear owing a total of 68,000 pesos.

The contractor agrees to feed and house his workers while they are in the field. Wages are paid on the basis of the amount produced at the rate of 30 pesos per 100 lbs. It is claimed that a good worker can clear in the 7 months season about 450 pesos (c.$225).

There is a general agreement among those engaged in the Mexican chicle trade that the life of the chiclero is not a happy one. Not only is the actual work of tapping the trees hard and dangerous, but the living conditions in the camps, removed as they are many miles from the railroads and cut off from all forms of social contact and civilized existence in the midst of dense semi-tropical jungles, are primitive to say the least. No secret is made of the fact that in many camps the whipping post often serves to stimulate production. It is estimated that there are about 22,000 chicleros more or less regularly employed in the industry.

In addition to the losses sustained each year from defaulting workmen and the loss of materials and equipment in the "brush" (one company claims to have lost 30% of its pack mules last year from lack of food, overwork, and"strayed in the bush") the companies engaged in the exploitation of chicle must

contend with the hazards of the weather. As was suggested above, the sap will not run in the trees unless there is a certain amount of rain. But this rain must come under just the right conditions. If there is too much rain, then the trails become impassable and, since everything must be transported on mule back, it is impossible for the men to get in or the chicle to be gotten out of the brush. Again-,if the rains are accompanied by high winds or cold weather the sap will not run.

The two greatest complaints of the companies engaged in the exploitation of chicle in Mexico at the present time are the high costs of handling charges by the labor unions in the ports and the restrictions imposed by the new federal forestry law. Handling charges from the dock to the boat in Progreso, Yucatan (through which port some 3,000,000 pounds of chicle were shipped last year-1927), for example, averaged about 23 pesos a ton. There seems to be little doubt that this is excessive. The new forestry law (Oct.13,1927) requires that each tree be inspected and stamped before it can be tapped. It is estimated by one of the companies that this will require about 5,000 inspectors. Since it is obviously extremely unlikely that this number of inspectors will be employed by the government, the companies are fearful that this law will only be used as an excuse for new forms of governmental graft.

Mexican Chicle and the World Market.

A glance at the table below quoted from the above-mentioned report by the United States Department of Commerce will reveal at once the dominant position occupied by Mexico in

in the world market as a producer of chicle. The tree is found in many parts of Mexico- Yucatan, Chiapas, Campeche, Vera Cruz, Tuxpam, Oaxaca, and Quintana Roo. The hignest development of the chicle industry at the present time is in the Yucatan peninsula, especially in the states of Campeche and the territory of Quintana Roo. (See table No.I on next page).

Mexican Chicle and the American Market.

The buying of chicle in the Mexican field is almost completely dominated and monopolized by two American companies - the William Wrigley Co., and the American Chicle Company. There are, however, about 25 smaller companies who form what there is of an"independent market" in the United States. The two above-mentioned companies are said to have complete control of fixing prices and are not averse to "freezing out" competitors in the Mexican field by breaking the market in the United States.

A comparison of the statistics of gross imports of chicle into the United States (see table No.II) with the total exports of chicle from Mexico(see table No.I) will snow the extent to which the Mexican chicle is absorbed by the United States manufacturers.

Note: The large imports of chicle into the United States from Canada are explained by the following ~~note~~: Before 1919 in order to avoid high import duties it was customary to import crude chicle into the United States in bond, ship it to Canada for drying, cleaning, and grinding, and then reimport it into the United States.

"This trade was at its height between the years 1904 and 1913, when 55 to 75 per cent of the American imports came from Canada. In 1919,however, with the erection of chicle plants

and equipment for cleaning and drying chicle in the United States, shipments were begun direct from producing countries to the United States, manufacturers of chewing-gum finding it more economical to import the crude chicle direct even though paying thereon a duty of 10 cents a pound. Imports into the United States from Canada during 1919 dropped 53% below those of 1918. During the succeeding three years these imports were greatly diminished, and in 1923 only 5 pounds were imported from Canada. The year 1924 showed increasing shipments from Canada to to the United States, the figure being 65,980 pounds; but they dropped back in 1925 to 7,320 pounds."

Table No.I.

TOTAL EXPORTS OF CHICLE FROM CHIEF PRODUCING COUNTRIES

Years	Mexico	British Honduras	Guatemala	Venezuela	Colombia	Other Countries	Total
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
1901	2,587,539	136,391					2,723,930
1902	3,977,436	249,686					4,227,122
1903	4,038,488	243,281					4,281,769
1904	4,077,439	534,825	137,521				4,749,785
1905	4,089,720	529,955	216,284				4,835,959
1906	4,810,292	941,634	173,695				5,925,621
1907	4,775,278	1074,042	223,438				6,072,758
1908	5,060,060	755,637	194,620				6,010,317
1909	5,784,562	942,954	234,265			2,406	6,964,187
1910	6,994,462	529,380	332,768	101		33,091	7,889,802
1911	7,072,710	768,821	491,884	1,263		5,564	8,340,206
1912	6,387,853	930,005	895,846	7,793		1,545	8,223,042
1913	8,081,993	1005,833	404,514	150,881		761	9,643,982
1914	+5,296,738	1099,696	742,295	576,230		44	7,715,003
1915	+5,120,681	1443,758	754,948	595,753	205,028	7,931	8,128,099
1916	+4,414,920	823,032	424,704	163,916	23,210	29,801	5,879,583
1917	+2,959,854	872,083	197,498	180,449		22,577	4,232,461
1918	3,722,893	810,425	607,854	577,118	1,001,041	9,932	6,729,263
1919	6,495,686	765,475	558,770	179,129	421,092	30,618	8,450,770
1920	+5,801,870	595,681	846,041	509,690	*719,095	14,387	8,486,764
1921	+3,722,002	437,375	821,510	219,988	*173,022	17,313	5,391,210
1922	+6,502,787	464,908	1,091,337	*288,594	346,562		8,694,188
1923	6,954,245	363,174	773,697	*116,131	449,964		8,657,211
1924	4,128,548	306,167	916,161	* 52,538	*291		5,403,705

+Imports into the United States and Canada.
*Imports into the United States.

Table No II.

GROSS IMPORTS OF CHICLE INTO THE UNITED STATES.

Year	From Mexico	From British Honduras	From Honduras	From Venezuela	From Canada	From Other Countries	Total
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
1901	2,074,228	86,765	9,446		907,171	63,158	3,140,768
1902	2,774,532	165,285		82	1,634,200	506	4,574,605
1903	1,995,611	336,277	2,079		1,872,585	45,695	4,282,247
1904	2,260,599	635,316	17,845		2,170,820		5,084,580
1905	2,244,115	696,842	10,377		2,108,471	361	5,060,166
1906	1,941,679	1,123,120	40,101		2,533,608	3,000	5,641,508
1907	2,771,630	658,903	35,673		3,266,251	124	6,732,581
1908	2,123,039	622,836	30,551		3,307,850	5,321	6,089,607
1909	1,399,062	589,530	3,189		3,451,971	6,387	5,450,139
1910	2,209,817	828,987	243	578	3,741,063	13,133	6,793,821
1911	679,295	968,478			4,853,855	6,580	6,508,208
1912	2,780,281	649,695	2,600	3,873	4,332,258	13,298	7,782,005
1913	4,109,925	1,120,360	378	66,498	8,249,135	212,296	13,758,592
1914	2,881,647	2,115,199	948	131,919	2,909,563	8,615	8,040,891
1915	2,197,188	1,138,907	20,296	952,358	2,180,655	10,260	6,499,664
1916	3,525,092	712,288	5,064	930,535	2,152,933	21,057	7,346,969
1917	1,580,220	1,259,506	15,975	137,976	4,415,849	30,496	7,440,022
1918	1,856,491	1,860,808	155,648	344,396	2,173,927	16,823	6,408,093
1918†	808,299	879,999	28,915	308,402	233,038	749,074	3,007,727
1919	4,113,602	2,440,502	131,144	172,077	595,513	1992,700	9,445,538
1920	5,046,588	3,231,117	54,517	414,426	274,278	838,862	9,858,788
1921	3,722,002	2,522,534		379,577	43,182	296,368	6,963,663
1922	6,502,787	2,010,012	163,243	288,594	173	243,170	9,207,979
1923	5,770,514	1,813,442	394,659	116,131	5	232,713	8,327,464
1924	5,626,713	1,463,389	516,390	52,538	65,980	193,660	7,918,670
1925	9,375,089	1,946,885	594,415	174,131	7,320	47,353	12,145,193

†July-December, 1918. Fiscal year ended June 30 from 1901 to 1918; calendar year thereafter.

Source: Commerce and Navigation of the United States.

Washington, D.C.,
March 16, 1928.

WSR-EMS

Dear Tylor:

Your number 30 reached me just as I was leaving New York.

I am a bit hazy as to what I said in my previous letters about trips in general. However, your recent one to Yucatan seems to have been more than justified.

What probably I really had in mind at the time, was to help you keep constantly in view the two extremes, namely, that trips may be of greatest value in adding to knowledge and experience or they may be -- are likely to be if not carefully planned and purposed -- sore wasters of time and energy.

For some reason -- I won't stop to search for it -- another line of frequent thought comes to me. In an effort to get a broad view of an area it is necessary to cover a wide range of topics. Unless great discretion is used, this may lead to superficial treatment. I don't pretend to know where the happy medium lies. Take the case of the subjects you took up in Yucatan. For all I know you may have done them thoroughly. But if you aren't satisfied, don't leave them until you are. Cut each stone sharply and truly place it and you'll have a fine edifice some day. Perhaps I better stop, for I seem to be in a preachy mood.

In writing me be as "explicit" as you like. Long experience has taught me that I make my fair share of errors or, if you prefer another figure, that I often miss my cues.

Will write again from New York some time next week.

Greetings to you both,