

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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Economics Department
Iowa State College
Ames, Iowa

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Belatedly this letter covering the last leg of my trip up from Buenos Aires is being sent to you. Since September 12 I have been in the United States, though almost continually on the move, having traveled in this manner: Miami to New York to Washington to Chicago to Muskegon, Mich., to Chicago, to Des Moines, to Boone, Ia., to Ames, Ia., to Sibley and back to Ames where I am at work for a period. It has been a long time since I was asked, or asked, as many questions as have been directed to me, or by me. But all that is quite beside the point. For continuity's sake I have still got to fly from Lima to Miami.

Roughly, from the ninth day of September until my arrival in Miami late the evening of September 12, I was in what had been, in the days of Bolivar, the Great Colombia. In those days Greater Colombia consisted of Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama and New Granada. Specifically, the Panagra airline follows a course from Lima to Chiclayo and Tulari in Peru, to Guayaquil in Ecuador, Cali in Colombia and Balboa in the Republic of Panama. Then, in one long hop, it spans the Caribbean to Miami. It is when one comes upon Ecuador that one realizes he is of a truth in the tropics. All at once, it seems, the arid mountainous wastelands which stretch from Santiago de Chile to the northern end of Peru are gone and the flat swamplands of coastal Ecuador appear. It is now the rainy season. The lowlands of the three countries over which we passed (Ecuador, Colombia and Panama) are endless swamps, half water and half islands, so lush with foliage and so filled with wild, tropical life that they are unlivable and, in many places, impenetrable. It is the old story of tropical country rich in natural resources and wealth awaiting the coming of a hardy and "superior race" which can tame it and exploit it. The jungle, however, is not easily tamed. It climbs up the imposing Andes in many places, thus depriving them of their bare Peruvian aspect. From many points of view, the most important country in the Gran Colombia of which Bolivar dreamed and for whose destiny he chose to become a Liberator is Colombia. Even today the dream of Bolivar has not been forgotten, although there are few realists who believe that it can come true. Obviously, Panama is in no position to accept Gran Colombianism. Venezuela, a country of oil and an agriculture that is by no means of a self-sustaining nature, has not reached a developed stage of national unity. Years of civil wars and internal contention have left its three million odd inhabitants in a kind of flux. Colombia, however, has a more developed aspect, but it is hard to believe that there can be much very practical in its dream of greatness. In any event, Colombia's resources and its nine million people present some interesting features for study and thought.

In all the cordillera of the Andes, there is to be found only one watershed of importance which runs from south to north. It is the Rio Magdalena of Colombia, the two branches of which divide the northern Andes into three ranges and which join before reaching the northern coast of Colombia in the Caribbean. Colombia's civilization and life is concentrated in the western third of the country and particularly in the valleys of the Magdalena and Cauca Rivers--the Cauca being a secondary branch. The eastern two-thirds of the Republic consists mostly of impenetrable jungle land, either sparsely inhabited or practically devoid of human life. Luckily, the rich Magdalena and Cauca River valleys, as well as their tributaries, mostly course their ways through an area sufficiently high to allow for a varied kind of agriculture.

In Colombia and the other countries of the Gran Colombia area a race is developing out of the melting pot that is distinctive from that of the Latin countries to the south. General racial groups can be classified as follows: The mes-

tizo, the mulato, the zambo, the trietnico (three races), and the European. The mestizo is simply the Spanish-Indian mixture which began a century before the English began the colonization of North America. The mulato is the Spanish-Negro mixture, a mixture that began with the slave trade. The zambo is a mixture of two conquered and dominated races, the Negro and the Indian. Curiously, the zambo is not accepted either by the mestizo or the mulato. Consequently, the zambos have tended to live a less civilized existence and to be closer to the jungle than any group. The trietnico type is simply the evolution of the melting pot, an individual with European, Indian and Negro blood and the type which is beginning to dominate in Colombia. Then, lastly, there are the three basic races which have been noted--the European, the Indian and the Negro. Although the racial evolution has proceeded a long way, in different regions of Colombia certain basic race types seem to be more favored by climate and other factors to such a degree that they can be found in regions. Indians, of whom there are less than 200,000, live in the heart of the mountain regions (much like Peruvians) and in some areas of the western part of Colombia. Mulatos and Negroes live in the coastal areas and in the hotter areas of the country. Zambos live on the lower Magdalena. The trietnicos, mestizos and Europeans live in the fertile Cauca and upper Magdalena valley region where most of the agriculture and populated centers are to be found.

Sixty percent of the wealth of Colombia is represented and produced by agricultural enterprises. Of the sixty percent, forty percent consists of cultivated crops and twenty percent of livestock production. Business and manufacturing accounts for 25 percent, mining for 10 percent. The other 5 percent is not classified. It is apparent, even looking hastily at Colombia's problems, that the latifundio is a social difficulty--a problem which many a Latin American country has to some extent. In the days of the Spanish monarchy, the Monarchs of Spain were the lords of the lives of their subjects and of all the wealth of their vast colonial empire. When a king conferred grants of land to subjects who "merited" reward, that subject became the lord and master of the land and the people who were attached to it. Naturally, the master of a hacienda does not in these days have all the broad authority which was common when Spain was in glory. But he still has a lot. In Colombia the latifundio is slowly being transformed. At first glance, if one looks at the statistics, one is apt to get a false view of the economic condition of ordinary people. There are a million titles to land in Colombia. However, in the richer zones (particularly where livestock haciendas are located) it is almost impossible for ordinary people to expand their small, minifundio holdings. It is said that in the coffee regions of the country, small property holders own most of the land. Of the cultivated crops, coffee is far and away the most important. Crops next in importance are sugar cane, bananas, corn, wheat, potatoes, rice, tobacco and cotton. It is dangerous to look at another economy with second-hand sources as the basis for judgment. Everything seems to indicate, however, that there is a kind of parallel between coffee cultivation in Colombia and the sugar cane problem in Tucumán, Argentina. Luis Enrique Osorio in his *Geografía Económica y Social de Colombia* states: "Of the 150,000 fincas dedicated to coffee production in Colombia in 1932, more than 90 percent of them consisted of small acreages of less than 10,000 trees which were responsible for half of the production." It would be interesting to find out how many of the fincas had less than 2,000 coffee "trees." Osorio's statement would seem to indicate that the minifundio problem prevailed. Livestock raising is not a small industry in Colombia, for there are nine million cattle, one head for each inhabitant. I have no idea how large the average Colombian hacienda is, though it is certainly smaller than the average Argentine estancia. With respect to the livestock industry (there are only 4,900,000 head of livestock other than cattle--horses, pigs, goats, sheep, mules, etc.) Osorio makes the following broad statement: "Looking at the livestock industry from a purely social point of view, it can be said that the cattle industry is the backbone of the latifundista. Upon other types of livestock, the small property owner depends."

Colombia's industry is almost inexistent. There are bottling works, principally for beer, a few alcohol distilleries, vegetable oil plants, flour mills,

textile mills for cotton, cigar and cigarette factories, etc. The mining and petroleum industries have been developed by foreign capital. Coal mining is on a small scale and iron fields lie untouched. That is Colombia, the most developed nation of the Great Colombia of Bolivar. I was in Colombia overnight, staying at Cali, an inland city. It was a short hop from there to the Canal Zone. For three days I stayed in the Republic of Panama. There are less than a million people in this tiny republic. The future of Panama, obviously, is tied up with the Canal, which has made it a crossroads of the world. Nothing eventful happened on the nine hour air trip by clipper from Panama to Miami. Above or in the clouds all the while, we did not see ocean-going craft nor Caribbean islands. At dusk we followed the beam down through the clouds to refuel at Cienfuegos, Cuba. Then we were off, pointed for the Miami beam--and home.

Now, after ten months, I am at journey's end. I have much for which to be thankful. The Argentine measured up to my anticipation. The friends whom I found there were more numerous and genuine than I had expected or hoped. In a simple phrase or two, I wish to express my appreciation to the Institute, to Mr. Rogers, to the trustees and the office staff of the Institute. During the past two weeks and a half I met many of those who read the accounts of my activities in the Argentine. To them, and to those whom I did not meet, I express my thanks for their continued interest and hope that some day the relationship may be resumed.

Sincerely,

Francis Neeron