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The treatment of this section is a model presentation of data. The abundant drawings and photographs record exhaustively the range of shape and decoration of the different wares. Mr. Horton's technical analysis gives a secure basis for determining local and imported wares and constitutes a valuable contribution to archaeological publication, all too frequently neglected in most reports.

Dr. Mason found his material for the most part in graves or in houses or ceremonial sites. There was no evidence of deep refuse beds suitable for stratigraphic dissection. There is hope, however, that through the association of objects in the graves, some sort of typological sequence will be developed. Dr. Mason's impression, however, was that the sites were neither of long duration nor of great antiquity.

The third part, the fourth volume in the series, will be awaited anxiously by workers in the field of South and Middle America. Here, after the able and exhaustive factual treatment of the materials found, Dr. Mason will set forth his conclusions as to their significance. The author's erudite sanity with which he has always approached problems of this nature, will make the conclusions a suitable culmination to the presentation of the material culture. The relationships between South and Middle America have always been a tantalizing problem for archaeologists, and Dr. Mason is setting a firm basis for their solution.

GEORGE C. VAILLANT.

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*Mexico at the Bar of Public Opinion. A Survey of Editorial Opinion in Newspapers of the Western Hemisphere.* By BURT M. McCONNELL. (New York: Mail and Express Publishing Co., 1939. Pp. viii, 320. \$1.00.)\*

So much has happened throughout the world since Mexico expropriated the foreign oil properties on March 18, 1938, that it seems like ancient history to delve into *Mexico at the Bar of Public Opinion*.

Mr. Burt M. McConnell did much conscientious work in assorting newspaper extracts, undoubtedly aided by a good clipping bureau. As he points out in the preface, he was a member of *The Literary Digest* staff from 1919 to 1929. He offers other pertinent facts:

In looking over the field of troublesome public questions which might be treated in the old *Literary Digest* manner, none seemed of greater import to the America

\* The custom of delimited reviews is abandoned in this instance in order to publish Mr. Lander's fresh analysis and additional information in the form of a review article.

of tomorrow than Mexico's treatment of United States citizens. The author approached the Standard Oil Company (N. J.) with the proposal that he prepare . . . an editorial digest of American newspaper opinion concerning Mexico's confiscation of American-owned property. The company financed the undertaking. The copy . . . is the work of the author.

This explanation does credit to the author and his sponsors. The reader knows in advance how the book came to be written. There is no attempt to camouflage it so that one might think it came from some source not directly concerned in the controversy.

Reading of the book tends to produce the following impressions:

Mexico under Cárdenas became very radical; a wave of strikes developed; the "labor squeeze" was invented; the foreign oil companies were victims of an unjust decision in the Mexican Supreme Court; they were obviously unable to comply with it. Suddenly the President, violating both the Mexican constitution and international law, expropriated the oil properties. The Mexican peso collapsed; costs of living skyrocketed; food crops failed. The "Good Neighbor" policy was put into jeopardy; American investment in all Latin America were endangered. The tourist traffic into Mexico all but ceased. Prospect of Cárdenas' overthrow by revolution increased. In spite of all this, the United States continued subsidizing Mexico by its silver-purchase program. The State Department should get busy and do something firm about this. Since Mexico cannot pay for the properties, they obviously should be returned to their former owners.

Now some of the above is very true, but much has proved wrong in the course of time. It seems that Mr. McConnell made a mistake of judgment in adapting the old *Literary Digest* style to book form. It might have been all right for a weekly, or even a monthly publication, but certainly not for a book.

There is some good material in it, especially quotations dealing with the effect of the expropriation on the "Good Neighbor" policy and how it endangered American investments throughout Latin America. The effect of Cárdenas' actions has undoubtedly been profound and far-reaching. The new Nicaraguan constitution provides for expropriation; Costa Rica, Bolivia and other countries have already tried it, and Colonel Fulgencio Batista has been urged to adopt it in Cuba. But to read all the predictions of possible starvation, overthrow of the government, the importance of Trotsky as an "advisor" to Cárdenas and all such things which have been proved to be

entirely without foundation, merely serves to prove that newspapers cannot be used uncritically for historical research. The advertising columns are much more reliable than the news columns of old papers. This is especially true in these days of rapid communication, and the axiom that news is a perishable commodity—which is no good except when fresh—is truer than ever. Here is a sample :

Many observers anticipate a civil war in Mexico. The *Houston Chronicle*, in the border state of Texas, makes this observation: “When the loss of revenue, due to seizure of the oil properties, is added to the previously existing causes of unrest, the danger of an uprising by dissatisfied elements is magnified.”

As a matter of fact, the expropriation—despite the fact it brought with it devaluation of the peso and intensified the depression which started with the crop failures of 1937—caused Mexicans of all classes to rally around their President. Many who made no pretense of hiding their opinion that Cárdenas had made a great mistake, declared that, since the question was of international character, they had but one course to take: to support Mexico. Even the Catholic Church, traditionally opposed to Mexico’s left-wing governments, openly supported Cárdenas. The deduction of Mr. McConnell—and the editorials and articles which he quotes from—are plausible in the realm of logic, but one must not lose sight of the fact that logic disappears in Mexico when questions of “national dignity” arise.

The oil situation is so complicated that nobody can put his finger on any one phase of it and say: “This is what caused the expropriation.” Nevertheless there is one important factor which is completely overlooked in *Mexico at the Bar of Public Opinion*. I refer to what happened in the hectic days following the Supreme Court decision of March 1, 1938.

The companies had sought an injunction in the Supreme Court against the Labor Board decision (of December 18, 1937) which ordered them to pay increased wages for their eighteen thousand workers of about twenty-six million pesos (then \$7,222,222) annually and compelled them to submit to other regulations which the companies contended amounted to taking the management of their own properties away from them. They also contended that the new wage scale, if put into effect, would in reality increase their pay-rolls by about forty million pesos (\$11,111,111) instead of the twenty-six million mentioned by the Labor Board.

Vicente Lombardo Toledano, head of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), in a speech at its national convention on February 22, 1938, predicted how the Supreme Court would rule and went on to say: “Soon the moment will arrive when the Government

of Mexico and the laborers must supplant the companies. We are ready to accept the technical, material, moral and historical responsibility which this involves." On the twenty-fourth, a commission of the Petroleum Workers Union visited the justices and asked them to decide the case in their favor. On the twenty-eighth, Mexico City newspapers practically announced that the decision would be against the companies. So it was no surprise when the petition of the foreign oil companies was denied by a 4 to 0 vote on March 1, 1938.

Now, it is all right for a Mexican to make fun of the Supreme Court of Mexico and talk about how it reaches its decisions—but Mexicans will not tolerate that foreigners do so. When the companies on the night of March 1 announced that they were unable to comply with the verdict, they immediately provoked a patriotic reaction in the country.

Company officials then held eleventh-hour interviews with General Cárdenas to see if they could make some arrangement to avoid complying with the court's order! Cárdenas adamantly insisted on the necessity of upholding the highest court of the land. "The government will irrevocably follow the course which the law determines," an official announcement said.

What is more, the companies in a district court sought an injunction against the Supreme Court's decision—something which sounds impossible, but which Mexican lawyers consider routine. A temporary restraining "suspension" was issued by Judge Manuel Bartlett, on March 8. This move proved to be a boomerang against the companies. By that time, labor and all official Mexico and even the Conservative newspapers were solidly against the petroleum interests—which began to be called "the rebellious companies," and all the old diatribes against the "foreign imperialists" were revived.

While Mr. McConnell claims that his quotations are taken from newspapers of the "western hemisphere," it so happens that he quotes nothing from what the Mexican press had to say during those days. He might, for instance, have quoted the leading independent daily *El Universal*, which on March 10 said:

"A serious study of the facts induces the belief that the problem can have but one natural legal outcome—the companies' submission to the authorities. No national would dare resist; no foreigner can evade submission, because if he were allowed to do so, legislation and the courts would be ridiculed and the sovereignty of the country would be stained and endangered."

On March 12 Judge Bartlett denied the companies' request for a permanent injunction, as his earlier "suspension" expired. Still the

companies refused to comply, and so notified the Federal Labor Board on March 15. The Board, at the request of the Petroleum Workers Union, thereupon declared the companies to be outlaws—or “in rebellion” as they say in Spanish. The CTM that night announced it had agreed on various “radical proposals.” It was not long before some aspects of its tactics came to light. On the sixteenth the Petroleum Workers Union announced that all its members had severed their collective work contract with the companies because of their “rebellious attitude.”

That night things looked rather grim in Mexico. After a staff consultation in the United Press office, a dispatch was written which said in part:

The petroleum controversy took a sensational turn when the laborers decided to sever their connections with the foreign companies. . . . If the labor board grants the workers' request, then the companies will find themselves without employes . . . and obliged to pay the lump sum of nearly \$39,000,000 (dollars) as severance wages. In case the companies refuse, then the laborers have the alternative of petitioning for the embargo of the companies' properties, or even their nationalization in accordance with Article 27 of the Constitution or their expropriation in the public interest in accordance with the Expropriation Law of 1935.

*La Prensa* of Mexico City the next day said the question “signifies the life or death of national independence.”

The Board received the workers' formal request for severance on March 17, and granted it on the eighteenth. At midnight of the eighteenth, relations between the companies and the workers were to end—but the laborers had been ordered to stay in the plants, in a modified “sit-down” strike. But by 10 p.m. Cárdenas was speaking on the radio, announcing the expropriation.

Little, if anything, of this crescendo of nationalistic feeling is mentioned in Mr. McConnell's book. Possibly his clipping bureau did not supply him with material therefor. There is still another explanation: the American press at that time was too busy with developments in Europe.

On March 3 another of the famed “Moscow Trials” had started, which ran until the thirteenth. Before that ended, another even bigger story “broke”—the annexation of Austria, which started on March 11 and reached its climax on the fifteenth when Hitler entered Vienna. On the eighteenth itself papers in the United States were full of Hitler's speech in the Reichstag at Berlin. Some of the correspondents in Mexico City that night were ordered by their editors to keep their dispatches short. In New York, the morning papers of

the nineteenth did have something on the expropriation, but it was not until the afternoon papers of that day that the story was really played up by the American press.

Thus, the circumstance that in its pre-expropriation stages the oil conflict was pushed off the front page by Stalin's and Hitler's doings, is partly responsible for the fact that even today the American reading public knows very little about it. It is too bad that Mr. McConnell in his book did not do something to fill in for the reader on what happened in that period between March 2 and March 18, 1938.

WILLIAM H. LANDER.

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Mexico, D.F.