Report of Director to the Ninth Pan American Sanitary Conference

The report of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to the Ninth Pan American Sanitary Conference, containing as it does a brief but comprehensive review of the duties and functions of the Bureau, is included here in part as follows:

"Mr. President and Gentlemen: .........."

"It is with profound satisfaction that I am able to report to you that the prospects for rendering effective service by the Bureau were never brighter, and it is most gratifying to observe that in spite of a financial crisis that has affected the entire world, the nations of this continent have, with few exceptions, been able to continue their financial support of our activities. .........."

"You will recall that fourteen years ago when the Sixth Pan American Sanitary Conference, at Montevideo, honored me by electing me as Director, the Pan American Sanitary Bureau existed in name only. Today, it is not too much to say, I think, that its influence is felt not only throughout the Americas, but in the Eastern Hemisphere as well. It should be remembered, however, that our resources are, for the time being, limited, and we should not, in my judgment, be tempted to dissipate our efforts by engaging in enterprises for which we do not have adequate funds, or, which are not germane to the purposes for which the Pan American Sanitary Conferences and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau were created. .........."

Here follows a brief relation of the development of the activities of the Bureau. Continuing, the report says:

"It is not my intention to recount further the early history of the Pan American Sanitary Conferences, but to tell you something of our purposes and of the present activities of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. In this connection may I remind you that our principal objectives may be enumerated as follows:

"First: To prevent by cooperative measures, the introduction of diseases from other countries and from one American republic into another. This objective includes the prevention of the introduction of vectors of disease, whether infected or uninfected, particularly of such vectors as are not already widely disseminated, vectors of such diseases as African trypanosomiasis, or sleeping sickness; vectors of Rocky Mountain and similar fevers, vectors of American trypanosomiasis, or Chagas's disease; vectors of onchocerciasis, which so often results in blindness; and of known and unknown vectors of yellow fever, particularly Aedes aegypti and others, if such there be, that breed in ground water and that convey yellow fever readily, at least under laboratory conditions.

"A Second objective is that of obviating the necessity of enforcing costly quarantines against infected ports by taking such local precautions as will prevent the infection of common carriers by land, by sea, and by air."
"A Third objective is that of stimulating health authorities in all the American republics to greater efforts for the control and eradication of disease, cooperating in such work upon request insofar as our resources will permit.

"A Fourth objective is that of securing the prompt reporting of quarantinable diseases in the territories of all the American republics and through cooperation with other international bodies, particularly the International Office of Public Health of Paris, the receiving of similar reports from countries in the Eastern Hemisphere. The prompt transmission of such reports establishes confidence and enables non-infected countries to apply a minimum of restrictive measures, whereas, failure to report the presence of quarantinable disease destroys such confidence, causes non-infected countries to become unsympathetic and leads them to impose drastic quarantine measures once the presence of such disease is revealed as it must be sooner or later.

"Finally, a most praiseworthy objective of our Institution is that of promoting cordial relations among the peoples of the American republics. I am happy to say that this has always been a relatively simple task. Fortunately, the subjects upon which controversy seemed likely to arise have usually been of minor importance and generally due to the persistence of some honest but misguided individual. So far, our general conferences have been practically one hundred per cent harmonious; may I express the hope that they shall always remain so.

"Let us pause now and inquire what have been the results of individual and cooperative efforts in the control of communicable disease during the brief period of time that our organization has been in existence. I am not speaking of our own efforts solely but of the combined efforts of all who have contributed, both official and voluntary agencies. ....

Here is given a general review of the results of the work of these combined agencies; of the work of the Bureau proper the report says:

"Step by step the Bureau has endeavored to expand its activities and increase its usefulness by fostering international cooperation and by stimulating and aiding the health authorities of affiliated republics in their efforts to prevent the spread of disease and to eradicate it from their territories. At the same time, the Bureau acts as a consulting office whose services are available for use by the health authorities of all American republics, consultations being invited on all matters pertaining to preventive medicine, hygiene and the protection of the public health. It also functions as a distributing center of current information regarding the presence of communicable diseases, the measures being taken for their control, and the most recent approved methods of combating them. It is the regional agency of the International Office of Public Health of Paris for collecting and transmitting reports of communicable disease occurring in the American republics, having been made so by the Eighth Pan American Sanitary Conference at Lima, Peru. Reciprocally, the Bureau receives from the International
Office similar information for the Eastern Hemisphere, which it transmitting regularly to the Directing Heads of the Health Departments of all the American republics.

"The Bureau endeavors to function as a harmonizing agency when conflicting interests of affiliated countries are involved. Not infrequently there arise honest misunderstandings and misconceptions, generally due to a lack of sufficient information or of more definite background. Sometimes outbreaks of disease in one country cause great alarm in others, particularly if such outbreaks are featured, perhaps exaggerated, in the daily press, a circumstance which tends to cause health authorities in uninfected countries to be stampeded into resorting to drastic, even obsolete quarantine measures. This is particularly apt to be so if there is a new and inexperienced health officer on the job, and the turn-over among the heads of our health departments is sometimes amazingly rapid. In contingencies such as I have just mentioned it devolves upon the Sanitary Bureau to obtain and disseminate authoritative information with regard to the actual situation and, if necessary, to remind all countries concerned of their treaty obligations in order to limit quarantine activities to a minimum of restrictive measures compatible with the public safety. To make quarantine alone effective in the control of communicable disease would paralyze both commerce and industry. We should bear in mind that quarantine measures are a sieve, and not a dam.

"Perhaps I can best illustrate the intimate contact maintained by the Sanitary Bureau with the Departments of Health of the various republics and with other International Health Bodies by a few concrete examples, such as the following: ...... ...... ......"

Here are related numerous examples. The following is quoted:

"Quite recently a vessel arrived at an important South American port with seven cases of illness aboard that were very suspicious of yellow fever; the vessel was detained in quarantine pending the making of a diagnosis. The fact got into the newspapers and a general alarm was sounded. The Sanitary Bureau cabled the Health Authorities who were detaining the vessel and immediately received the information that the cases were Weill's disease. Upon the release of this information, confidence was restored. ...... ...... ......"

Continuing, the report states:

"A very important work of the Bureau is the publication of the Pan American Sanitary Bulletin, a monthly journal printed in Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English, and dedicated to the dissemination of information relating to hygiene and public health, and the cultivation of good will. It is sent without charge to physicians and others connected with Departments of Health both National and local, and to certain others who are more than casually interested in public health. It is the goal of the Bureau to continue to improve the contents of the Bulletin, and to place it in the hands of at least one physician or other person interested in public health work in every town of 2000 inhabitants or over throughout the whole of Latin America...... ...... ......"
Field Activities

It will be recalled that Medical Director John D. Long was made Traveling Representative of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau in August, 1928, since which time his work has been chiefly in connection with bubonic plague.

On September 18, 1929, measures to eradicate this disease in Ecuador were begun in cooperation with the Health and other authorities of that country. On September 5, 1930, a similar campaign was inaugurated in Peru. These efforts were for the purpose of intensifying campaigns that had already been carried on for a number of years by Peruvian and Ecuadorian authorities with varying degrees of success.

As stated in previous annual reports, the measures chiefly relied upon by Dr. Long for the extermination of plague, where it actually existed in the two countries named, have been campaigns of intensive poisoning of rats. In Guayaquil this measure gave excellent results in a very short time, no plague having been reported in that city since March, 1930. It should be said in this connection, however, that for many years the character of buildings in Guayaquil has been progressively improved by rat-proofing measures, though the prompt disappearance of plague in that city must be attributed to the campaigns of intensive poisoning; furthermore, systematic poisoning has been continued since its initiation nearly six years ago.

Apparently it has been somewhat difficult to evaluate the results of poisoning in other places in Ecuador, and also in Peru, particularly when viewed from the standpoint of permanent eradication of plague; nor is this surprising when it is recalled that the poisoning of rats does not kill the fleas on them, and that those insects can retain infection and transmit plague without feeding for a period of several months.

Bearing this fact in mind, and recalling the extreme fecundity of rats, the continued existence of plague during the present fiscal year in both Peru and Ecuador is readily understood, and those experiences coincide with what has transpired in many other countries during the last half century.

Of the necessity of rat-proofing measures as a means of effecting permanent results in combating plague, Dr. Long says in his report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1931, (speaking of the central market of Lima, Peru): "It is absolutely necessary to reconstruct the market and make it rat-proof. Also all the houses, warehouses, grocery stores, and places where provisions and merchandise are stored should be made rat-proof."

Dr. Clifford Eskey, who was for a time associated with Dr. Long, makes, in his summary of the work in Peru, the following statement: "The greatest incidence of plague per thousand population in towns and cities in Peru occurred in the communities in which the rat harborage of buildings was greatest regardless of the climatic location of the towns within or outside the zone most favorable to the existence of the chief transmitting agent, X. cheopis. It is doubtful whether the low incidence or even complete absence of human plague due to relative rat-proof construction of buildings could be better illustrated than by the findings in central and southern Peru. It is desired to emphasize that in most parts of the world where X. cheopis is the transmitting agent, plague could never exist in epidemic form if the buildings were so constructed and maintained that the rat population within them was
reduced to a minimum. There are few countries in which lack of rainfall, high humidity, and moderate temperatures furnish as favorable conditions for the existence of X. cheopis, and also exterior harborage of rats, as are found in Peru, yet even the relative rat-proof construction of buildings here has reduced and prevented the establishment of plague in many coast towns. (C. R. Eskew, Public Health Reports, November 18, 1932).

A detailed account of the antiplague work in Peru and Ecuador during the calendar year 1934 is being published in the Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana, in a paper by Dr. Long entitled, "Bubonic Plague on the West Coast of South America in 1934." The following interesting excerpts from this article further illustrate the difficulties of eradicating plague in rodents:

"Latent or inapparent plague"

"It is rare to find a rat at autopsy with visible lesions of plague. Most of the plague infection among rats is discovered through the making of mass inoculations. ...

"Much thought and study have been given to this matter of latent plague and, to help elucidate the problem, the following experiments were made: Laboratory Technician Hector Colichón Arbulu inoculated, over a period of some months, a series of healthy rats with plague-infected material by the scarification method. A certain number of the rats, although quite sick following the inoculations, did not die. A rat that had recovered was asphyxiated with hydrocyanic acid gas 30 days after recovery. No visible lesions of plague were discoverable at autopsy except the scar left at the site of inoculation. Stained microscopic slides made from the internal organs and glands of the rat were negative for plague. An emulsion made from the spleen, liver, and lymphatic glands of the animal, when inoculated into a guinea pig, killed the pig with typical bubonic plague.

Identical results were obtained from other rats; one in 60 days after apparent recovery and another in 90 days. Ninety days is the longest latent period so far found.

Laboratory Technician Arquines Ranos Diaz conducted over a period of some months a series of feeding experiments. Healthy rats that had been under observation long enough to demonstrate that they were not plague-infected were fed the livers and spleens of guinea pigs that had died of proved plague.

One or two of the rats did not die or become infected. In the rats that became infected and died, the following observations were made: In one rat only the cervical glands were involved; another had lesions only in the glands of the mesentery; and another had ulcers in the interior of the intestine that had not perforated the peritoneal coat of the organ. Virulent plague bacilli were recovered from the involved tissues in each case and also from the spleen and liver, thus showing that the usual terminal bacteriemia had been produced.
Following the above-described observations, more careful search was made for involved cervical and mesenteric glands and for intestinal involvement. As a result, a trapped rat was found that had a few small, whitish, elliptical intestinal plaques. These plaques were not ulcerated in the interior of the intestine and had not perforated the peritoneal layer. There were no signs of inflammation. The plaques were removed, and microscopic stained smears were made from them. A number of Gram-positive and negative microorganisms were seen and also a few Gram-negative bipolar staining bacilli. A guinea pig was inoculated in the eyeball, a method that experience has shown to be useful where micro-organisms are scarce and of low virulence, and died in a few days. There were no typical lesions at autopsy, but since some suspicious looking bacilli were seen a second guinea pig was inoculated with an emulsion made from the eye, the spleen, and liver of the first pig. This pig died in nine days of typical plague.

"Antiplague measures that have been used"

"Rat-proofing has not been done except in very isolated instances, however, as it is architecturally and economically impossible. In Guayaquil, the sanitary authorities have used rat-proofing measures for a number of years.

"The trapping of rats has been carried on continuously in all the larger cities and, especially, in the seaports in all three countries. It has not been carried on, however, as a rat extermination measure; it has been done for the sole purpose of getting rats for laboratory examination in order to determine plague indices among them.

"Systematic fumigation of shipping and maritime vessels has been carried on for obvious reasons. Since 1930, only in one instance were plague-infected rats found on a ship. All rats after fumigation are examined in the laboratory.

"The principal mainstay of the cooperative antiplague campaigns in Ecuador, Peru, and Chile, has been the systematic and wholesale use of rat poison.

"Summary"

"The Republic of Chile, in accordance with the standards specified in the Pan American Sanitary Code, can be considered free from bubonic plague.

"Plague in Peru has been reduced over a 31-year period from an average of about 664 cases per year to 46 cases in the year 1934.

"All of us who have been actively engaged in the suppression of bubonic plague over a period of years believe that fleas under favorable conditions as to temperature and humidity, especially low temperatures and relatively high humidities, can act as reservoirs of plague infection, carry it over long distances and, later, under favorable conditions, transmit the disease. The incidents cited in this article strongly indicate that head lice and guinea pig fleas can also act as reservoirs of plague infection and, under certain special circumstances, serve as the means by which plague infection is produced. Views relative to the transportation of infected fleas in certain types of cargo were set forth in an article in the Pan American Sanitary Bulletin of November, 1934, under the title, "Experiences with Fleas as Carriers of Bubonic Plague."
Prevalence of Communicable Diseases

Reports of quarantinable diseases are distributed weekly in mimeographed form. Information concerning quarantinable and other communicable diseases is published monthly in the Pan American Sanitary Bulletin.

**Bubonic Plague.** Cases of human or rodent plague, or both, were reported in the Republics of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, the United States, and Peru. Ports in nearly all American Republics were free from plague, and even when present caused no interruption in the schedules of common carriers. The following is taken from the Annual Report of Traveling Representative John D. Long, submitted under date of May 27, 1935:

"Ecuador ----- During the first half of the fiscal year, practically no cases of confirmed bubonic plague were reported in the Republic. During the last half of the fiscal year some 13 cases have been reported from the Province of Loja, District of Celica. Three cases were also reported from one focus in the Province of Chimborazo.

"Peru ----- During the calendar year 1934, Peru had the lowest number of confirmed cases of bubonic plague that have occurred since the disease first made its appearance in the Ports of Callao and Pisco in 1903. There were a total of 46 cases. This represents a reduction in the number of cases of approximately 93 per cent, as compared to the average annual number of cases that have occurred since 1903.

"The first six months of the current year have not shown such encouraging statistics. Due to certain special and unusual conditions extensive rat migrations have occurred which have been followed by epizootics among them with resulting human cases. The larger number of the cases have occurred in the cities of Lima and Callao, and in the Department of La Libertad, Provinces of Trujillo and Pacasmayo. While there has been an increase of cases, the situation is not thought to be alarming or dangerous, and the number of cases should soon be reduced through active and efficient work.

"Chile ----- There has been no human case of plague reported, and confirmed, in the Republic of Chile since January 1930. The last plague infected rats were found in the Port of Antofagasta in August 1932. Active antiplague measures are still being applied in the two ports of Antofagasta and Iquique, as a measure of precaution."

Subsequent to the date on which Dr. Long's report was made, additional information regarding the plague situation in Peru and Ecuador has been received as follows:

Since January 1, 1935, there has been a total of 55 cases with 33 deaths from plague in Peru.

In Ecuador there have been 32 cases, and 15 deaths, during the same period. On April 10, 1935, a case of plague was observed in the General Hospital in Guayaquil, Ecuador, the first evidence of plague in that port since March, 1930, when the last infected rat was found. The Health authorities do not regard this
as a truly autochthonous case, stating that it is believed that the disease was brought from the interior in the body of an infected flea. This opinion is based on the fact that no other human or rodent infection was found in the vicinity, and that the deceased was employed in discharging cargo from freight trains arriving from the interior.

Yellow fever. This disease was present in many rural areas in the interior of Brazil. However, no sea- nor airport became infected, and there was no interruption of traffic on either land or sea on account of yellow fever. The disease was also reported in the interior of Colombia and Bolivia during the year, and there is a possibility that it may exist in other portions of the Amazon Valley. Brazilian workers, in cooperation with members of the Rockefeller Foundation, have contributed greatly to the newer knowledge of this disease, and the Government of Brazil has waged indefatigable warfare against it. The discovery of the fact that yellow fever can exist in the absence of Aedes aegypti and the gradual improvement in procedures for immunizing against yellow fever, are among the outstanding events of recent years.

Typhus fever, smallpox, tuberculosis, malaria, undulant fever, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, scarlet fever, and various other communicable diseases continue to be reported from most American republics, but not as a rule in excess of previous years. Detailed information with regard to the occurrence of cases of these diseases will be found in the monthly issues of the Pan American Sanitary Bulletin.

Receipts and Expenditures—Finances

An estimate of the proposed expenditures for the fiscal year 1935-36 is included in the Appendix to this Report, together with a statement of the receipts and expenditures for the current year.

H. S. CUMMING
Director
BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1936

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**SALARIES**

Scientific Editor and Chief Translator --------------------- $ 5,400.00  
Clerks and other assistants, including translators ------------  15,000.00  
One retired clerk ----------------------------------------  1,200.00

**TRAVELING EXPENSES**

Traveling Representatives ----------------------------------  5,000.00  
Other representatives of the Bureau, including members of the Directing Council ---------------------  10,000.00

**PUBLICATIONS**

Bulletin of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau ---------------  20,000.00  
Publications, reprints, etc. -------------------------------  2,500.00

**MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURES**

Telegram and cablegrams, including postage to foreign countries -----------------------------------------------  670.00  
Pension and retirement fund ---------------------------------  650.00  
Office furniture and equipment -----------------------------  500.00  
Group insurance -------------------------------------------  30.00  
Stationery and office supplies -----------------------------  350.00  
Library, books and scientific journals ---------------------  400.00  
Miscellaneous -------------------------------------------  300.00

T O T A L $62,000.00
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES
of the
PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU

For the fiscal year July 1, 1934 - June 30, 1935

RECEIPTS

1. Quotas for previous fiscal years
not paid until after the beginning
of the fiscal year July 1, 1934 to June 30, 1935:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1929-30 (On account)</th>
<th>1930-31</th>
<th>1933-34 (Balance)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2,289.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>67.51</td>
<td>5.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>409.16</td>
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<td>$10,614.45</td>
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2. Quotas for fiscal year July 1, 1934 to June 30, 1935:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
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<td></td>
<td>37,518.00</td>
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3. Quotas paid on account of years
subsequent to June 30, 1935:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
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4. Miscellaneous receipts

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,692.21</td>
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TOTAL RECEIPTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$52,261.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPE$DITURS

Salaries:

Scientific Editor and Chief Translator—$5,400.00
2 Translators------------------------------- 4,905.00
4 Stenographers and Typists--------------- 5,002.13
1 Medical Entomologist------------------ 1,087.33
1 Clerk---------------------------------- 1,590.00
1 Retired Clerk---------------------------- 1,200.00  $19,184.46

2. Printing of the Pan American Sanitary Bulletin--------- 14,346.89
3. Printing of publications, reprints, cards, etc. ------- 330.69

4. Traveling Expenses:

(a) Director--------------------------------- 300.00
(b) Assistant to the Director------------- 453.44
(c) Traveling Representative----------- 3,000.00  3,753.44

5. Office furniture and equipment-------------------------- 223.15
6. Stationery and office supplies------------------------- 494.69
7. Books and scientific journals for the Library---------- 232.30
8. Postage to countries not members of Pan American Union- 148.95
9. Telegrams, cablegrams, etc. -------------------------- 255.10
10. Insurance-------------------------------------- 28.21
11. Contribution to Employees' Retirement and Pension Fund- 594.75
12. Miscellaneous------------------------------------- 96.76

TOTAL EXPENDITURES---- $39,689.39
QUOTAS OF THE 21 AMERICAN REPUBLICS

For the maintenance of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Fiscal year 1935-36</th>
<th>1934-35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Argentina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>9,460.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<td>Ecuador</td>
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<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<td>Haiti</td>
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<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
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<td>695.62</td>
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</table>

TOTAL      | 260,590,589         | $56,006.97 | $54,717.74 |