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MEMORANDUM TO PROFESSOR RENE G. FONTAINE, F.A.O.

FROM
F.C. LEHMANN V .

OFFICIAL DELEGATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
COLOMBIA

NAIROBI, SEPTEMBER, 20th,
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CONSERVATION PROBLEMS IN COLOMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA.

1. Rapid and almost complete deforestation of the three Andean ranges, shifting cultivation. Pastures in very steep hillsides, etc.

Consequences:

destruction of forest reserves,
destruction of flora and fauna habitats
diminishing of river water, and therefore lack of water
for irrigation of lower valleys, for electric power and
water supply for rapidly growing cities. Less possibility
for fish to subsist in very small streams in very
muddy waters. Re-afforestation with exotic species that
change the ecosystem, landscapes, and generally does not
supply food for wild birds and general animal populations.

2. Lack of proper hunting regulations, wanton killing of wildlife, commercial exploitation of wildlife in the form of live birds, mammals, and reptiles exported in the hundreds of thousands per year. The exportation of wild animals' skins; reptiles, mammals and birds in millions per year, killing by clubbing the largest rodent "capibara" to sell its meat to Venezuela. About 100.000 per year at least.
3. Lack of implementation of Law 2a of 1963, to develop areas for national parks, as stated in that Law on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture.

- Lack of adequate control and management of the areas already established as National Parks or Reserves.
4. Lack of strict enforcement of existing laws on forest conservation and soil conservation.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS :

Rapid establishment of National Parks and Reserves.

Game laws promulgated and enforced.

Enforcement of existing laws on forest and soil conservation.

An intensive education program on Natural Resource importance and conservation.

Sending specialists in conservation fields, such as Ecologists, Zoologists, Botanists, or advise the government to consult the local scientists in these fields before any large-scale program is launched.

Support and help to scientific institutions dealing with nature studies and conservation as:

Natural Sciences Institute, National University, Bogotá.

State Museum of Natural History, Cali, Colombia.

Natural History Museum, Universidad del Cauca, Popayán.

Ministerio de Agricultura, Bogotá.

Secretaría de Agricultura del Valle. Cali.