

Guide to Sources for the History of Latin America—British Volume

PETER WALNE*

WORK OF THE preparation of this volume has been in progress since the late summer of 1961 with the aid of funds from the International Council on Archives. This volume will be one of a series of *Guide to Sources for the History of Latin America* in European and U.S. archives and manuscript repositories at present in preparation under the sponsorship of the International Council for Archives.

The work is directed by a committee consisting of Sir David Evans, formerly Keeper of the Public Records, Sir Robert Somerville, Clerk of the Council and Keeper of the Records of the Duchy of Lancaster, Professor R. A. Humphreys, Professor of Latin American History, University College, London and Mr. P. Walne, County Archivist of Hertfordshire and Honorary Secretary to the Committee.

Through the cooperation of archivists, keepers of manuscripts, librarians and owners of papers still in private hands, the Committee has a considerable amount of information on relevant materials in the British Isles. In view of the extent and importance of their holdings, special enquiries are being or have been made at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, The British Museum (Department of Manuscripts and Map Room) and through the cooperation of the Keeper of the Records, a detailed report on the relevant materials in the Public Record Office has been made for the Committee. By questionnaire, a survey of relevant business archives, justified by the close commercial and business ties between the British Isles and Latin America, is currently in progress. A thorough search of all Historical Manuscript Commission Reports for relevant material is being made. Certain groups of papers still in private hands or in archive or manuscript repositories will be given a more thorough survey than has so far been possible, in the near future.

Editorial work on the *Guide* has already begun and it is hoped

* The author is County Archivist of Hertfordshire.

that a major portion of the text will be completed by the autumn of 1964 but no publication date has yet been fixed.

Unlike some European countries, which have centralized and integrated state archive services and thus able to give the preparation of their *Guide* official sanction and assistance, the British Volume has had to be prepared on a voluntary basis through the cooperation of all who are charged with the care and custody of relevant materials and of scholars and experts in the field. The Committee is most grateful for all the help and encouragement, often at personal inconvenience, with which their enquiries have been met.

The *Guide*, when completed, will owe more to the model of Crick and Alman's *Guide to the Manuscripts relating to the United States in Great Britain and Ireland* than to the model of Davenport and Andrews and Paullin and Paxson's series of *Guide to Materials for American History*, published by the Carnegie Institution after World War I. While it might have been hoped to emulate the earlier *Guides* in the amount of detail recorded, the limited resources at the Committee's disposal precluded so intensive and deep-seeking treatment. More materials are now available for the history of Latin America than was the case a half century ago, which is another reason for less detailed treatment.

None the less the Committee hopes that when the *Guide* does appear, it will serve to fill in a considerable gap in making known more widely the manuscript sources for Latin American History in the British Isles and in making their exploitation by Latin American experts easier.