

**REPORTS OF INTERNATIONAL
ARBITRAL AWARDS**

**RECUEIL DES SENTENCES
ARBITRALES**

**Award regarding the Boundary between the Colony of British Guiana and the
United States of Venezuela**

3 October 1899

VOLUME XXVIII pp. 331-340

PART XXV

**Award regarding the Boundary between
the Colony of British Guiana and
the United States of Venezuela**

Decision of 3 October 1899

**Sentence arbitrale relative à la frontière
entre la colonie de Guyane britannique
et les États-Unis du Venezuela**

Décision du 3 octobre 1899

AWARD OF THE TRIBUNAL OF ARBITRATION CONSTITUTED UNDER ARTICLE I OF THE TREATY OF ARBITRATION SIGNED AT WASHINGTON, BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES OF VENEZUELA, REGARDING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE COLONY OF BRITISH GUIANA AND THE UNITED STATES OF VENEZUELA, DECISION OF 3 OCTOBER 1899*

SENTENCE DU TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL, ÉTABLI EN VERTU DE L'ARTICLE I DU TRAITÉ D'ARBITRAGE, SIGNÉ À WASHINGTON, ENTRE LA GRANDE BRETAGNE ET LES ÉTATS-UNIS DU VENEZUELA, RELATIVE À LA FRONTIÈRE ENTRE LA COLONIE DE GUYANE BRITANNIQUE ET LES ÉTATS-UNIS DU VENEZUELA, DÉCISION DU 3 OCTOBRE 1899**

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* * * * *

WHEREAS, on the 2nd day of February, 1897, a Treaty of Arbitration was concluded between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of Venezuela in the terms following:—

Ratifications exchanged at Washington, June 14, 1897.

HER Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the United States of Venezuela, being desirous to provide for an amicable settlement of the question which has arisen between their respective Governments concerning the boundary between the Colony of British Guiana

* Reprinted from *British and Foreign State Papers*, Compiled by The Librarian and Keeper of the Papers, Foreign Office, vol. 92, London, 1903, H. M. Stationery Office, p.160.

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and the United States of Venezuela, have resolved to submit to arbitration the question involved, and to the end of concluding a Treaty for that purpose have appointed as their respective Plenipotentiaries:

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Right Honourable Sir Julian Pauncefote, a Member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath and of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, and Her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States;

And the President of the United States of Venezuela, Señor José Andrade, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to the United States of America;

Who, having communicated to each other their respective full powers, which were found to be in due and proper form, have agreed to and concluded the following Articles:—

ART. I. An Arbitral Tribunal shall be immediately appointed to determine the boundary-line between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela.

II. The Tribunal shall consist of five Jurists: two on the part of Great Britain, nominated by the members of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, namely, the Right Honourable Baron Herschell, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, and the Honourable Sir Richard Henn Collins, Knight, one of the Justices of Her Britannic Majesty's Supreme Court of Judicature; two on the part of Venezuela, nominated, one by the President of the United States of Venezuela, namely, the Honourable Melville Western Fuller, Chief Justice of the United States of America, and one nominated by the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, namely, the Honourable David Josiah Brewer, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States of America; and of a fifth Jurist to be selected by the four persons so nominated, or in the event of their failure to agree within three months from the date of the exchange of ratifications of the present Treaty, to be selected by His Majesty the King of Sweden and Norway. The Jurist so selected shall be President of the Tribunal.

In case of the death, absence, or incapacity to serve of any of the four Arbitrators above named, or in the event of any such Arbitrator omitting or declining or ceasing to act as such, another Jurist of repute shall be forthwith substituted in his place. If such vacancy shall occur among those nominated on the part of Great Britain, the substitute shall be appointed by the members for the time being of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, acting by a majority, and if among those nominated on the part of Venezuela, he shall be appointed by the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, acting by a majority. If such vacancy shall occur in the case of the

fifth Arbitrator, a substitute shall be selected in the manner herein provided for with regard to the original appointment.

III. The Tribunal shall investigate and ascertain the extent of the territories belonging to, or that might lawfully be claimed by, the United Netherlands or by the Kingdom of Spain respectively at the time of the acquisition by Great Britain of the Colony of British Guiana, and shall determine the boundary-line between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela.

IV. In deciding the matters submitted, the Arbitrators shall ascertain all facts which they deem necessary to a decision of the controversy, and shall be governed by the following Rules, which are agreed upon by the High Contracting Parties as Rules to be taken as applicable to the case, and by such principles of international law not inconsistent therewith as the Arbitrators shall determine to be applicable to the case: —

Rules.

(a.) Adverse holding or prescription during a period of fifty years shall make a good title. The Arbitrators may deem exclusive political control of a district, as well as actual settlement thereof, sufficient to constitute adverse holding or to make title by prescription.

(b.) The Arbitrators may recognize and give effect to rights and claims resting on any other ground whatever valid according to international law, and on any principles of international law which the Arbitrators may deem to be applicable to the case, and which are not in contravention of the foregoing rule.

(c.) In determining the boundary-line, if territory of one Party be found by the Tribunal to have been at the date of this Treaty in the occupation of the subjects or citizens of the other Party, such effect shall be given to such occupation as reason, justice, the principles of international law, and the equities of the case shall, in the opinion of the Tribunal, require.

V. The Arbitrators shall meet at Paris, within sixty days after the delivery of the printed arguments mentioned in Article VIII, and shall proceed impartially and carefully to examine and decide the questions that have been, or shall be, laid before them, as herein provided, on the part of the Governments of Her Britannic Majesty and the United States of Venezuela respectively.

Provided always that the Arbitrators may, if they shall think fit, hold their meetings, or any of them, at any other place which they may determine.

All questions considered by the Tribunal, including the final decision, shall be determined by a majority of all the Arbitrators.

Each of the High Contracting Parties shall name one person as its Agent to attend the Tribunal, and to represent it generally in all matters connected with the Tribunal.

VI. The printed Case of each of the two Parties, accompanied by the documents, the official correspondence, and other evidence on which each relies, shall be delivered in duplicate to each of the Arbitrators and to the Agent of the other Party as soon as may be after the appointment of the members of the Tribunal, but within a period not exceeding eight months from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty.

VII. Within four months after the delivery on both sides of the printed Case, either Party may in like manner deliver in duplicate to each of the said Arbitrators, and to the Agent of the other Party, a Counter-Case, and additional documents, correspondence, and evidence, in reply to the Case, documents, correspondence, and evidence so presented by the other Party.

If in the Case submitted to the Arbitrators either Party shall have specified or alluded to any report or document, in its own exclusive possession, without annexing a copy, such Party shall be bound, if the other Party thinks proper to apply for it, to furnish that Party with a copy thereof, and either Party may call upon the other, through the Arbitrators, to produce the originals or certified copies of any papers adduced as evidence, giving in each instance notice thereof within thirty days after delivery of the Case, and the original or copy so requested shall be delivered as soon as may be, and within a period not exceeding forty days after receipt of notice.

VIII. It shall be the duty of the Agent of each Party, within three months after the expiration of the time limited for the delivery of the Counter-Case on both sides, to deliver in duplicate to each of the said Arbitrators, and to the Agent of the other Party, a printed Argument showing the points, and referring to the evidence upon which his Government relies, and either Party may also support the same before the Arbitrators by oral argument of Counsel; and the Arbitrators may, if they desire further elucidation with regard to any point, require a written or printed statement or argument, or oral argument by Counsel upon it; but in such case the other Party shall be entitled to reply either orally or in writing, as the case may be.

IX. The Arbitrators may, for any cause deemed by them sufficient, enlarge either of the periods fixed by Articles VI, VII, and VIII by the allowance of thirty days additional.

X. The decision of the Tribunal shall, if possible, be made within three months from the close of the argument on both sides.

It shall be made in writing and dated, and shall be signed by the Arbitrators who may assent to it.

The decision shall be in duplicate, one copy whereof shall be delivered to the Agent of Great Britain for his Government, and the other copy shall be delivered to the Agent of the United States of Venezuela for his Government.

XI. The Arbitrators shall keep an accurate record of their proceedings, and may appoint and employ the necessary officers to assist them.

XII. Each Government shall pay its own Agent and provide for the proper remuneration of the Counsel employed by it, and of the Arbitrators appointed by it or in its behalf, and for the expense of preparing and submitting its case to the Tribunal. All other expenses connected with the Arbitration shall be defrayed by the two Governments in equal moities.

XIII. The High Contracting Parties engage to consider the result of the proceedings of the Tribunal of Arbitration as a full, perfect, and final settlement of all the questions referred to the Arbitrators.

XIV. The present Treaty shall be duly ratified by Her Britannic Majesty and by the President of the United States of Venezuela, by and with the approval of the Congress thereof, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in London or in Washington within six months from the date hereof.

In faith whereof we, the respective Plenipotentiaries, have signed this Treaty, and have hereunto affixed our seals.

Done in duplicate at Washington, the 2nd day of February, 1897.

(L.S.)

JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE.

(L.S.)

JOSÉ ANDRADE

And whereas the said Treaty was duly ratified, and the ratifications were duly exchanged in Washington on the 14th day of June, 1897, in conformity with the said Treaty;

And whereas since the date of the said Treaty, and before the arbitration thereby contemplated had been entered upon, the said Right Honourable Baron Herschell departed this life;

And whereas the Right Honourable Charles Baron Russell of Killowen, Lord Chief Justice of England, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George has, conformably to the terms of the said Treaty, been duly nominated by the members of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council to act under the said Treaty in the place and stead of the said late Baron Herschell;

And whereas the said four Arbitrators, namely: the said Right Honourable Lord Russell of Killowen, the Right Honourable Sir Richard Henn Collins, the Honourable Melville Weston Fuller, and the Honourable David Josiah Brewer, have, conformably to the terms of the said Treaty, selected his Excellency Frederic de Martens, Privy Councillor, Permanent Member of the Council of

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Russia, LL.D. of the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh, to be the fifth Arbitrator;

And whereas the said Arbitrators have duly entered upon the said Arbitration, and have duly heard and considered the oral and written arguments of the Counsel representing respectively Her Majesty the Queen and the United States of Venezuela, and have impartially and carefully examined the questions laid before them, and have investigated and ascertained the extent of the territories belonging to or that might lawfully be claimed by the United Netherlands or by the Kingdom of Spain respectively at the time of the acquisition by Great Britain of the Colony of British Guiana:

Now we, the undersigned Arbitrators, do hereby make and publish our decision, determination, and award of, upon, and concerning the questions submitted to us by the said Treaty of Arbitration, finally decide, award, and determine that the boundary-line between the Colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela is as follows: —

Starting from the coast at Point Playa, the line of boundary shall run in a straight line to the River Barima at its junction with the River Mururuma, and thence along the mid-stream of the latter river to its source, and from that point to the junction of the River Haiowa with the Amakuru, and thence along the mid-stream of the Amakuru to its source in the Imataka Ridge, and thence in a south-westerly direction along the highest ridge of the spur of the Imataka Mountains to the highest point of the main range of such Imataka Mountains opposite to the source of the Barima, and thence along the summit of the main ridge in a south-easterly direction of the Imataka Mountains to the source of the Acarabisi, and thence along the mid-stream of the Acarabisi to the Cuyuni, and thence along the northern bank of the River Cuyuni westward to its junction with the Wenamu, and thence following the mid-stream of the Wenamu to its westernmost source, and thence in a direct line to the summit of Mount Roraima, and from Mount Roraima to the source of the Cotinga, and along the mid-stream of that river to its junction with the Takutu, and thence along the mid-stream of the Takutu to its source, thence in a straight line to the westernmost point of the Akarai Mountains, and thence along the ridge of the Akarai Mountains to the source of the Corentin called the Cutari River:

Provided always that the line of delimitation fixed by this Award shall be subject and without prejudice to any questions now existing, or which may arise, to be determined between the Government of Her Britannic Majesty and the Republic of Brazil, or between the latter Republic and the United States of Venezuela.

In fixing the above delimitation, the Arbitrators consider and decide that in times of peace the Rivers Amakuru and Barima shall be open to navigation by the merchant-ships of all nations, subject to all just regulations and to the payment of light or other like dues: Provided that the dues charged by the Republic of Venezuela and the Government of the Colony of British Guiana in respect of the passage of vessels along the portions of such rivers

respectively owned by them shall be charged at the same rates upon the vessels of Venezuela and Great Britain, such rates being no higher than those charged to any other nation: Provided also that no customs duties shall be chargeable either by the Republic of Venezuela or by the Colony of British Guiana in respect of goods carried on board ships, vessels, or boats passing along the said rivers; but customs duties shall only be chargeable in respect of goods landed in the territory of Venezuela or Great Britain respectively.

Executed and published in duplicate by us in Paris, this 3rd day of October, A.D. 1899.

F. DE MARTENS.
MELVILLE WESTON FULLER.
DAVID J. BREWER.
RUSSELL OF K^N.
R. HENN COLLINS.