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AN AMAZON TRIBE TAKES A STEP OUT

Kranhacárore Indians Make Contact With Brazilians

By MARVINE HOWE

Special to The New York Times

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb. 10—A small group of the legendary Kranhacárore Indians emerged from the Amazon jungle a week ago and made what was believed to be their tribe's first contact with the outside world.

Twenty members of the tribe walked into the camp of Claudio Villas Boas, a leading Brazilian expert on Indian affairs, and embraced him as a sign of goodwill and an indication that they looked upon him as a chief. Mr. Villas Boas and his brother Orlando had been trying to get in touch with the tribe for more than a year.

"A reserve must be immediately marked out for the Kran-



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Indians emerged on road along the Peixoto de Azevedo River (cross).

hacárore tribe, or they'll be doomed to destruction as our civilization penetrates their domain," Orlando Villas Boas said this week in an interview in São Paulo, where he had taken an Indian boy for medical treatment.

Meanwhile, the National Indian Foundation, for which the brothers work, closed all Indian areas to other than its own personnel in a move to prevent the spread of London flu to the tribesmen.

According to Orlando Villas Boas, the final approach to the Kranhacárores, or short-hairs as they are called by other Indians, began two weeks ago, when the tribesmen gathered near the brothers camp on the Peixoto de Azevedo River, situated about midway along a new jungle road being built between Cuiabá and Santarém.

He described the Kranhacárores as "very tall for Indians, many of them around six feet tall." He also said that he thought they were one of the last pure races in the world.

First Encounter Described

Orlando Villas Boas said the first encounter took place last Sunday and was repeated Monday in a nervous atmosphere, according to reports he had received by radio in the foundation's office in São Paulo. But after the initial greetings, there was an exchange of presents. Claudio Villas Boas offered his visitors necklaces, knives, hatchets and utensils. In return he received bows, arrows and wooden clubs.

The Kranhacárores speak a mixture of Gê and another language that the Indian experts have not yet identified. The only means of communication is by gestures and presents.

"We have to be very careful what we offer the Indians to avoid insulting them," Orlando Villas Boas said, adding that, for example, they generally hate anything made of plastic.

Makes First Contacts

He explained that the main missions of the National Indian Foundation were, to make the first contacts with Indians and to protect them from those people who had not been trained how to deal with them. This was an allusion to a recent tragedy.

In the northernmost Amazon area in Roraima state three employes of the foundation were killed by Indian tribesmen out of revenge for insults to their women by road workers.

The Government's decision to build the Cuiabá-Santarém road persuaded the Villas Boas brothers of the necessity of establishing contact with the Kranhacárores who inhabited area. The expedition set out on Jan. 16, 1972, and after a long and delicate period, has finally achieved the first step of "pacification."

This was the last such mission of the Villas Boas brothers, who have applied for retirement. Orlando, at 55 years of age, wants to complete a book on their work with the Indians. He is also planning to drive from Brazil to Canada for an Indian conference.

Claudio, who is 53, is almost blind in one eye and suffers from long bouts with malaria. He will probably retire in São Paulo with his adopted Indian son.

The Villas Boas brothers were proposed as candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971 by the Society of Primitive Peoples, an organization based in London.