

# SOUTH AMERICA

**A** TOUR of South America would be very exciting. At the Equator are the hot steamy jungles of the Amazon lowlands. To the west comes the great climb up to the Andes Mountains – the world's longest mountain chain. The peaks are so high that even the volcanoes are snow-capped all year. Travellers on buses and trains are offered extra oxygen to breathe, because the air is so thin.



▲ **Reed boats on Lake Titicaca**, the highest navigable lake in the world. It is high in the Andes, at 3811 metres above sea level. Totora reeds grow around the shores, and the Indians tie bundles of reeds together to make fishing boats. The picture shows the reed shelters they use while they make the boats and go fishing. In the background you can see a mountain rising from the plateau.

Lake Titicaca is shared between Peru and Bolivia. A steam-powered ferry boat travels the length of the lake.

Why is Lake Titicaca the only stretch of water available for the Bolivian navy? (Check the map!)

Squeezed between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean in Peru and northern Chile is the world's driest desert – the Atacama Desert, which stretches southwards from the border with Peru for nearly 1600 kilometres. Very few people live here.

Further south in Chile are more wet forests – but these forests are cool. The monkey-puzzle tree originates here. But eastwards, in Argentina, there is less rain and more grass. Cattle on the Pampas are rounded up by cowboys, and crops such as corn (maize) grow well. Further south is the very cold and dry area called Patagonia, where sheep farming is important.

