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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

First session

SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM

MR. H. M. PELLIPS

Mr. Chairman:

It is a matter of very warm satisfaction to the Government of the United Kingdom to be present here at the opening Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America.

In my country we have always had a keen and active interest in the economy of Latin America. This arises from the long ties of goodwill and of common democratic purposes which have existed between the countries of Latin America and the United Kingdom, and also from the mutual trading and economic interests we have long had in common.

It also arises from the belief of my Government, which has been so often expressed by our Prime Minister Mr. Attlee and by Mr. Bevin, our Foreign Secretary, that world economic collaboration is an indispensable factor in the development of a peaceful, a prosperous and a truly democratic world. We have always regarded Chapter 9 as one of the vital parts of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure that all of us here believe in the truth of the saying that prosperity is indivisible. I hope we will have this continually in our minds throughout the work of this Commission and this is certainly the spirit with which my Government approaches this Session.

My country has come to this view both from ideal reasons and from hard practical reasons coming from the lessons of our long history as a nation which has been prosperous when the world was prosperous and has been in difficulties when the world has been in trouble.

If the world is to have trade and industrial and agricultural development on a truly global scale with all the advantages it brings,

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/then the countries

then the countries of the world have to face the problem of mutual interdependence.

What is involved is national effort at home and effort in the international field.

We are in my country making great efforts at home to increase our production and make good our war sacrifices in the face of the present currency and trade dislocations and shortages of means of production, which are plaguing the world today. Our exports at the end of March were 26 per cent higher in volume than in 1938, but we still need and are making further productive efforts to replace our war sacrifices.

In the field of international trade, about one quarter of the trade of the world measured in volume, takes place with the United Kingdom. Our aim is not only the expansion of our own trade but we need to see a greater total expansion of world trade as a whole.

May I here at this point make one thing very clear. I am referring to the question of industrial development in parts of the world which are at present under-developed. I warmly agree with what the distinguished Delegate of France said so well yesterday, that the industrialization of Latin America does not menace the economies of the industrially developed countries. So far as my Government is concerned, our policy is to encourage industrial and agricultural development in under-developed regions. We do not believe in a fixed total of production and, for our part, we would regard any such theory to be as antiquated as that of Ricardo's Wages Fund. There is no fixed total of world industrial production of which the United Kingdom will have a lesser share if other countries, at present under-developed, are able to achieve industrial development. On the contrary, the whole course of economic history has shown that the expansion of industry overseas and the development of new markets leads to an expansion of our trade, after given periods of adjustment. We are wholeheartedly behind the efforts which this Commission will make to increase the diversity of industry and raise the level of economic activity in Latin America.

Our representatives in New York were greatly impressed by the Statements made by the Latin American Delegates at the United Nations regarding the special and difficult problems of Latin America and we shall be glad to give all the assistance in our power during the work of the Commission.

We are sure that advantages to the region will flow from the opportunities for mutual consultation and discussions on common problems which the Commission will provide.

/A further

A further practical matter directly before the Commission is the action laid upon it in connection with food matters by the resolution passed by the Economic and Social Council at its last Session.

We have at present in the United Nations a complex machine made up of functional and regional Commissions, and there are 9 or 10 important specialized agencies. Clearly the regional Commission for Latin America will have an important role to play in co-ordinating these activities on the regional level, and in preventing duplication of work with other organizations concerned.

Members of the Commission will doubtless be aware of the work of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East which began by concentrating its efforts on the collection and evaluation of basic material.

The technical efficiency of the Commission is bound to depend a great deal upon the division of adequate statistical and technical data and I feel sure that the Commission will wish to lay a firm groundwork of facts on which it will want to base its studies and make its recommendations.

May I say here that I hope and trust that the technical work of the Commission, which will depend much upon the persons appointed to the Secretariat, will be of the highest possible order. I am glad Mr. Owen, the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations for Economic Affairs, is representing Mr. Trygve Lie here today and can hear these remarks himself, because I am sure he will agree fully. The Economic Commission for Europe has collected in Geneva a fine body of technical experts, and we have seen recently how the value of their technical work has created collaboration on certain issues, on which, if they had been approached on a political basis, co-operation may have been unlikely.

It might be of interest if I quoted Mr. Myrdal, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, on this point. In his speech to the Third Session of the Economic Commission for Europe, he said "I believe it to be a clear lesson of experience in International Economic co-operation.....that.....the more precisely the issue for discussion and negotiation.....can be defined, and the more they can be entrusted to expert Government representatives, the more likely are concrete and practical results to be achieved."

I hope, therefore, that the Commission will build up a proper and adequate apparatus of facts which are most needed for practical purposes. In this connection I feel sure that all of the countries concerned should submit the fullest possible information about economic reconstruction and their own plans which can be of real value to their neighbours and to the region generally.

/We consider

We consider that the Secretariat have acted wisely in proposing in Document E/CN.12/4 that Member Governments of Latin America should prepare between the first and the second Session factual surveys of current economic conditions in their countries. In view of the magnitude of the task of the collection of comprehensive data for the region this procedure appears to be the most practical one to adopt at this stage.

It would be our hope that it would be possible for the Secretariat to give individual assistance to Governments in the preparation of the Surveys, and that the Specialized Agencies would be associated as far as possible with the work, but it should in the view of my Government be a task for the Commission itself to define the fields to be surveyed.

My Delegation naturally approaches the matter with some diffidence as the Latin American countries themselves are in the best position to know their own problems. It would, however, appear to us that in the surveys attention should be concentrated upon certain main aspects.

Among these are agricultural and industrial production including questions of types of crops, of machinery and questions of equipment, and of fertilizers.

Another aspect is measures to combat inflation. Then of course there is the question of the necessary capital facilities.

Another aspect is road and rail transport. There has been a report on Inland Transport in Latin America by the United Nations Transport and Communications Commission but the matter must have further study.

Another aspect is fuel and power production and distribution which are necessary to raising the general level of economic activity and to creating a diversity of industry. Yet another aspect of the same kind is technical training and expert assistance.

All of these aspects have a bearing upon raising the general level of economic activity and securing greater diversity of industry and production, and information on them will no doubt find its place in the surveys so that the Commission may develop its work on a practical and concrete basis.

My Delegation is glad that the Secretariat have listed the question of technical skill and training and of expert assistance among the functions of the Commission permitting immediate action, and we shall be glad to take a helpful part in such a discussion.

I want, in finishing, to say how happy my Government is that the First Session of this Commission is taking place in Chile, a country with which we have so many traditional links, and a country which, if I may say so, has been outstanding for its legislation in the Social field, based
/on a spirit

on a spirit of fair play amongst the various elements of Society.

It is fitting also that the Session should take place here for it was Chile which was above all responsible, through the medium of its distinguished Delegate to the United Nations, for the setting up of the Commission. If this Commission does not become a lusty and healthy growth, I am sure it will not be because of any lack of effort on the part of the Chilean Delegation, whose contribution to the work of the United Nations, particularly to the Economic and Social Council, and recently in dramatic circumstances to the work of the Security Council, has been outstanding.

I am grateful to you Mr. Chairman, for giving me this opportunity of contributing to the general debate, and I want to say how pleased my Delegation is to take part in this important gathering, and to take this opportunity to thank you Mr. Chairman, for the warmth of the welcome which you have given to us in this distinguished city.



