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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

ADDRESS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS

DOCTOR A. METHOFER

Mr. Chairman:

Having given full support to the proposal made in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to set up an Economic Commission for Latin America, it was with great pleasure that the Government of the Netherlands received the invitation to participate in the work of this Commission. Its interest in the problems to be dealt with in this Conference is due principally to the desire to co-operate and to make its contribution to the welfare of a part of the world with which my country has for centuries maintained close commercial and cultural relations, and which, because of its enormous wealth and resources, is unquestionably destined to play a preponderant role in any future international organization.

In his interesting address of last Thursday, the distinguished representative of France spoke, as Mr. Denis himself explained, not only for France but for all Europe in its present situation. In fact, practically everything he said on that occasion is applicable to my country. Permit me, nevertheless, to take up a few points again and to add a few ideas which, in the opinion of this Delegation, deserve special attention.

Conflicting views have been expressed in this assembly as to the effect which the industrialization of the Latin American countries will have on the economy of the countries producing manufactured articles. In my opinion the development of various industries in these countries will undeniably injure certain manufacturers and merchants who normally export or exported the articles concerned, but nowadays neither Governments nor large enterprises are so short-sighted that they cannot see where their own true interests lie; that is, in raising the standard of living inside and outside their own territories. I venture to cite some examples here. Great world enterprises such as Unilever, Philips and others are following a plan of decentralization and establishing /factories in

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factories in various parts of the world, often combining their capital with that provided by capitalists of the countries in which they set up their new establishments. Others, for example, in the field of artificial silk, are making available to industrialists of other countries their experience and their manufacturing processes and techniques. In a commercial treaty recently concluded between the Netherlands and the Argentine Republic, my country undertook to furnish ships, thereby contributing to the expansion of the Argentine merchant marine; which undoubtedly tends to increase competition in the field of shipping, for long one of the Netherlands' principal sources of wealth.

Nevertheless the economic expansion of any continent must in the long run result in such an increase in freights that any possible initial disadvantages will be fully compensated.

The distinguished representative of Haiti has asked the countries receiving direct aid under the Marshall Plan to make known their views on the subject. As regards my country, I may say that it is absolutely essential for us to re-establish our productive capacity, which has been seriously affected by the ravages and other effects of war. But if you examine our productive apparatus more closely you will see that neither its composition nor its administration can tend to prejudice the reconstruction or development of the productive capacity of other countries, but that, on the contrary, it can help to accelerate the industrialization of such countries.

I am, Mr. Chairman, merely making a few general remarks which are not intended to do more than illustrate the tendencies to which I have referred. I understand that the Commission urgently needs to pass on to practical work. In this connection, and in accordance with the instructions which I have received from my Government, I venture to make the following recommendations:

1. That the experiences of the European Economic Commission and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East be used as far as possible.
2. That, as was done in the above-mentioned Commissions, an estimate of the possible requirements of individual countries be made, and the structure of the international trade and social conditions prevailing in each country be outlined.
3. That the specialized work necessary for the fulfilment of the Commission's task be entrusted to sub-committees, possibly of experts.
4. That those sub-committees be given sufficient time to draw up  
/their reports

their reports and submit detailed information on their various problems at the next plenary session of the Commission.

I think it wise, Mr. Chairman, to confine myself to these few remarks and suggestions, since my country's contribution to the search for solutions to this Continent's problems is largely determined by our geographic position and can consequently be only a modest one.

Before concluding, may I express my hopes for the success of the Conference and the deep gratitude of my Delegation for the hospitality which is being offered us in this beautiful Chilean capital.

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