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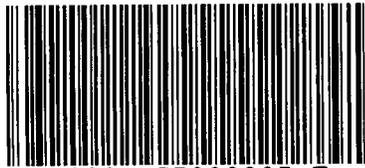
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ADDRESS MADE BY SR. JORGE MEJIA PALACIO
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL.

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Mr. Chairman:

When accepting the invitation to attend this meeting, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council appointed Dr. Amos A. Taylor and myself as their representatives at this Third Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America. This is an honour which affords us not only the privilege of taking part in these important discussions, but also the pleasure of meeting once again old friends, with whom we are united by our love for America. I have been instructed to transmit to all the honourable delegations to this Assembly a message of friendship from the Inter-American Economic and Social Council and their best wishes for the success of your work.

The reason for our presence here is simple and well known to all those seated around this table. When the Economic

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and Social Council, in its Resolution of 11 August 1947, set up an ad hoc committee to study the factors which would affect the creation of an Economic Commission for Latin America within the framework of the United Nations, it recommended it, amongst other things, to consult with the other organizations interested, both within and without the United Nations, and to ascertain the point of view of the ninth International American Conference, which was meeting in Bogota in January 1948. It was the intention of the Economic and Social Council that the creation of this organization should meet with the approval of all the American countries, since it was to be placed at their service, and also that it should not interfere in the work undertaken many years ago by the Pan American Union, an exemplary international organization which during sixty years has overcome the gravest crises and has seen the birth and failure of apparently much stronger organizations, such as the League of Nations of Geneva.

This consultation was only natural and completely satisfied the anxiety of the twenty-one American republics to defend their regional organization, built up over a century of permanent contacts, from the historical Congress of Panama in 1826 inspired by Bolivar, until the present day. The Pan-American system has reached political maturity through eight

/International Conferences

International Conferences in which legal principles were adopted in order that any conflict between our countries could be solved by conciliatory and peaceful means, while regarding the military aspect, it has culminated in the Inter-American Pact for Mutual Defence of Rio de Janeiro. It has also developed a programme of economic cooperation, first during the second World War through the Commission for Inter-American Economic and Financial Affairs, which gave such fruitful results, and subsequently through the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, created during the Inter-American Conference on problems of War and Peace, held in Mexico in 1945.

It fell to Dr. Alberto Lleras Camargo, the present Secretary of the Organization of American States, to put before the ad hoc committee the point of view of this regional organization and it is useful to remember some of his words "I understand that, according to the Resolution of the International Council related to the creation of the Economic Commission for Latin America, the American Governments are concerned lest the functions of this new organization be a fruitless repetition of those entrusted to the Inter-American Council. Evidently the majority of the American governments do not consider it impossible to avoid a duplication of work,

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though this is the opinion of a minority. Furthermore the majority of the American governments appear to believe that the Economic Commission for Latin America, would be entrusted with a particular function which could not be carried out by the Inter-American Council, such as the determination after appropriate investigation, of the measures which could be taken to re-establish or establish economic cooperation between Latin America and the rest of the world, which had suffered seriously as a result of the war. As regards economic cooperation between the American countries, I think it is understood that no one wishes to attribute the task of examining and encouraging it to a new organization, since this is naturally a function of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council". He later added: "As is evident from the proposal of the Inter-American Council, the tendency of the American governments is to preserve the inter-american system so that it may continue to pursue its regional aim maintaining its autonomy and competence. They are all loyal and enthusiastic members of the United Nations but they have arrived at the conclusion, not now, but since Chapultepec, that they are not incompatible and that the one would not be a useless duplication of the other.

/It might be

It might be thought that in connection with the establishment of the Commission for Latin America the American governments would say that what is plentiful is not harmful, and that consequently a new organization on the same lines of the existing one would not be detrimental. This is not the case. They well know that the American peoples and Congresses are concerned lest the cost of international organizations become too great. It might become too heavy a burden for the great majority of the Latin American governments which do not have unlimited funds at their disposal to devote to their relations with the rest of the world. Today this concern is expressed first by the constant effort to avoid duplication of work. Later it might take other forms, such as a reaction against excessive bureaucracy, which contributed to such a serious extent to the undermining of the prestige of the League of Nations; and ultimately, when this prestige has been undermined, against the organizations themselves. For this reason, though the governments may not be continuously expressing their anxiety in this respect, the international organizations would do well to control their activities very closely in order to ensure that they are economical, efficient, and that they fully repay the financial sacrifices which they demand of the Governments".

/It was with this thesis

It was with this thesis in mind that the Economic and Social Council stated in Article 9 of its Resolution of the 25 February 1948:

"The Commission shall co-operate with and take the necessary measures to co-ordinate its activities with the appropriate organs of the Inter-American System and as may be necessary with the Caribbean Commission in order to avoid any unnecessary duplication of effort between those organs and itself; to this end the Commission is empowered to and shall seek to make working arrangements with the appropriate organs of the Inter-American System regarding the joint or independent study or execution of economic problems within its competence and the fullest exchange of information necessary for the co-ordination of efforts in the economic field. The Commission shall invite the Pan American Union to nominate a representative to attend meetings of the Commission in a consultative capacity."

/Later the IXth

Later, the IXth Inter-American Conference, held at Bogotá in 1948, approved Resolution X which reads as follows: "The IXth Inter-American Conference, considering that the functions attributed to the Economic Commission for Latin America, created by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations at a meeting held on February 25th, 1948, are essentially similar to those of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council approved by this Conference, and that it is necessary to avoid duplication of organisations and work: RESOLVES:- That the Inter-American Economic and Social Council shall appoint a commission of not more than three Members, who shall confer with the Economic Commission for Latin America, in Santiago, Chile, during the month of June next, for the purpose of establishing a plan for both organisations, by which their scope and programmes of work shall be fixed, including the liason for the purpose of avoiding any duplication of organisation, personnel or functions."

From the foregoing it will be seen that it has been the constant concern not only of the Latin American Governments but also the Economic and Social Council of United Nations to avoid any such duplication of functions or efforts between organisations whether they be of an international or regional order, and they have, furthermore, sought to create

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between such organisations a permanent and healthy spirit of cooperation and exchange of information which permits the one to make use of the other's experience.

Hence the reason for the presence of Dr. Taylor, Secretary of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, and myself, as one of its members, at these deliberations. Our only purpose is to serve as a link between the regional organisation of the Inter-American Council of States that are concerned with the Continent's economic and social problems, and yourselves. Our object is to coordinate the tasks of interest to the two organisations, offering ample and sufficient data on the work of the Council which we represent and subsequently reporting back to it on the projects which it is your intention to undertake in the future. Such a task of coordination is by no means impossible, especially for those of us who are aware of the immensity of the work to be done in the way of development of Latin American economic and social spheres, and for those of us who know how necessary it is to make the very best use possible of the scanty resources available for so vast an undertaking. Before us are twenty-one republics and territories that are not only beset by economic and social problems to be solved among themselves,

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and which our Government feel should be settled by the regional organizations created, but problems affecting the relationship between the continent and other parts of the world that would appear to have determined the creation of this special Commission for Latin America.

The Inter-American Economic and Social Council has a vast field of action which it has been covering carefully. Only a month ago in Washington, the most highly qualified representatives of these twenty one republics were met together in an Extraordinary Session of the Council to adopt a regional plan of technical cooperation on a large scale and also to review the reports and projects which are to serve as the basis for the Buenos Aires Economic Conference, called by the IXth Inter-American Conference at Bogota. There are problems of intercontinental scope, however, that are best dealt with by the United Nations; such as, for instance, questions of immigration from Europe, the inflow of foreign capital, monetary phenomena of foreign exchange, the intensification of trade with other parts of the world. Even where technical assistance is concerned, the regional matters approved in Washington only cover those aspects for which the Inter-American Council of States

/has competent

has competent and experienced organisations so that there are a good many other aspects with which United Nations will have to deal through its own organisations. There is, thus, plenty to be done and the important thing is to coordinate our efforts and define our functions, not only because that is the express mandate of our Governments but because it is in the interests of the Americas.

It will be seen that cooperation is already bearing good results, as a consequence of the concern reflected in our efforts during the second Session at Havana. At the request of the ECLA Secretariat, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council prepared the complete report on Uruguay and a part of the Mexican one dealing with "Financing Economic Development" which is to be presented to this Session. Furthermore, one of its most highly qualified experts, Dr. Alfonso Rochac, worked with the joint FAO-ECLA working party on the report relating to improvements in agricultural production in Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras. It is the desire of the Inter American Economic and Social Council that such cooperation should be increasingly extended and ECLA may be assured that whenever practicable, such assistance on our part will never be refused.

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We are of the opinion that there should be a greater exchange of information between our respective Secretariats. In fact, it is not a question of waiting until the reports are in their final form and approved, before exchanging them as has been the case to date. On the contrary, each organisation should be kept informed of the preparatory process adopted, which would enable opportune comments to be made and complementary information to be supplied. Among the suggestions I wish to make is that such an exchange of material should be effected at least every two months, thus permitting closer contact between the two Secretariats.

According to article 16 of the Resolution of February 25th, 1948, the Economic and Social Council should make next year a review of the Commission's work with a view to determining whether the Commission should be terminated or continued, and if continued what modification should be made in its terms of reference. This is one of the duties of the aforesaid organ of United Nations and therefore of the countries of Latin America and of our Governments as members of the world organisation. Thus this III Session is of the greatest importance since it can be considered an occasion to pass judgment from the point of view of the activity or inactivity of the Commission and so determine its future.

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I specifically say inactivity, since any lack of concrete results would be sufficient to justify its discontinuation. And by activity I mean that any activity beyond its specific functions, contrary to the will of the Governments of the Americas who place special emphasis on the autonomy of regional systems and their preservation, would at least create an unfavourable atmosphere among some if not all of these Governments. The resolution of the Council will depend, to a great extent on the way this session develops and the way in which its work is concluded.

The Inter American Economic and Social Council was not consulted by our Governments on this point nor is it competent to solve the question. However, the Council feels that, as from now, it should declare its belief that whether or not the Commission is to subsist, the work it has begun should be concluded and the purposes for which it was created should be pursued. In addition, the Council believes that with this objective, the United Nations should continue to allocate the necessary sums in its Budget. Latin America needs this contribution to its progress which, in fact, is no more than a compensation for the amounts invested in other continents in efforts to keep the peace. An unnecessary expenditure in Latin America since these countries have learned to live together and are guaranteed by their treaties and their regional organisations, the proved efficiency of which is indisputable.

/ As His Excellency

As His Excellency the Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs said in his speech yesterday, ECLA's mission is to fit Latin American economy into the world plan. The work of the Inter American Economic and Social Council is to build up its internal structure through cooperation in the continent itself. Though each maintains its separate identity, they require the balance of their joint forces to fulfill the tasks for which they were created. Each within our own sphere of action and with a high sense of the responsibility devolving upon us, let us work together for the economic welfare of the Americas.
