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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC DELEGATION

MR. TULIO M. CESTERO

Mr. Chairman:

The delegation of the Dominican Republic is inspired in its sincere co-operation in this Economic Commission for Latin America by the following thought, expressed in a recent proclamation to the nation by the head of the State which it represents:

> "The United Nations is the work of all, and all must strive not only to assure its existence, but also to help to make it more effective in its enormous task of world peace and restoration."

When Christopher Columbus discovered in 1492 the island which he called "Hispaniola", he was so impressed by its natural wealth in forests, rivers, ports and produce, and by its geographical position as the nearest land to Europe, that he immediately selected it as the operational centre of his great undertaking. Thus, its economic resources supplied the expeditions which explored and colonized the other islands and the mainland both in the north and in the south of the New World. From this "wonder island" the Spanish genius carried forth that Christian civilization which through the centuries has engendered the democratic brotherhood of America that now brings us together in this noble nation of Chile, where the thought of statesmen and the blood of soldiers have been consecrated from the earliest days of our nations to the need of union for continental defence.

The Dominican delegation takes great pleasure in thanking the Government of Chile for the kind hospitality with which we have been honoured, and also for the happy initiative of the Chilean delegation in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, whereby we are offered this opportunity of studying the structure of our economies in such a friendly atmosphere, in order to contribute with our products and our moral strength to world stability.

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* This document is a revised translation of the original which was issued in Santiago.

/DOMINICAN

DOMINICAN PRODUCTION

In the year which has just ended, the economy of the Dominican Republic reached the highest level in its history: its exports amounted to $83,205,293, made up as follows:

Raw sugar	R.D. $	50 424 067
Cocoa beans	R.D. $	12 951 938
Leaf tobacco	R.D. $	4 547 867
Coffee beans	R.D. $	4 050 355
Cane molasses	R.D. $	2 296 371
Maize	R.D. $	1 135 754
Roasted coffee	R.D. $	1 076 020
Refined sugar	R.D. $	873 214
Bananas	R.D. $	657 080
Manioc starch	R.D. $	524 821
Pine timber	R.D. $	503 351

The principal purchasers and the amounts they bought were:

United Kingdom	R.D. $	34 476 902
United States of America	R.D. $	21 064 361
Canada	R.D. $	8 629 316
Chile	R.D. $	7 139 391
Puerto Rico	R.D. $	3 109 181
Netherlands West Indies	R.D. $	1 764 662
Netherlands	R.D. $	1 635 813
France	R.D. $	1 075 276
Spain	R.D. $	897 191
Belgium	R.D. $	604 035
French West Indies	R.D. $	589 726
Algeria	R.D. $	508 510

Redemption of the Foreign Debt

Another achievement in 1947 was the redemption of the foreign debt by a payment on 17 July of US $9,271,855.50. By this payment, made several years in advance and without any change in the public works programme for 1947, the Dominican Republic has become, as proclaimed by President Trujillo: "absolutely free, absolutely sovereign, and absolutely independent, and is bound by no obligations whatsoever hindering the free use of her economic resources".

FISCAL, MONETARY AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

Government revenues in 1947 also reached an extraordinary figure, the highest since the founding of our Republic in 1844: 739.49, that is 379.46 more than in 1929, the year of the world crisis. Since 1930 the

/Public

Public Expense Budget has shown a surplus each year, the total of such surpluses amounting to US $27,737,899.89.

In 1947 the Banco Central was established, and the International Monetary Fund fixed the parity of the Dominican peso with the US dollar. The Banco de las Reservas and the Banco Agricola Hipotecario (Agricultural Mortgage Bank) are the property of the State. In March 1948 the Banco de las Reservas had total assets of R.D. $33,010,213.72. This bank began operating in 1941 with $7,953,219.26; its commercial loans at that time amounted to $600,000 and have now increased to $4,400,000.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTION

Since 1930 the Dominican Government has constantly striven to obtain the greatest possible agricultural and livestock production and the highest quality in products, one of its purposes being to provide neighbouring islands with food.

The Dominican Republic, with its very fertile soil, well irrigated by nature, could support a population much greater than its present two million inhabitants, and could compete on world markets with its surplus to a much greater extent than at the present time.

Through Government initiative, an excellent highway system connects the ports with all the cities and villages in the north and with those in the south on the Haitian border, and enables produce to be transported quickly, easily and safely. In irrigation, nature's endowment is supplemented by the Government's canal system, which now supplies 200,000 hectares.

For foreign commerce the capital city of Ciudad Trujillo has a big, safe and modern port equipped for large, deep-draft vessels; and on the Atlantic coast in the north Libertador, serving as an outlet for a large part of the banana production, is also a safe and modern port. In the chief sugar-producing area the port of San Pedro de Macoris is being enlarged and modernized.

WEST INDIAN TRADE

The submarine campaign of the Axis in the Caribbean Sea caused great loss of life and property, and destroyed the Dominican steamships operating in the West Indian trade. This trade, as shown by export statistics for 1947, is already reaching promising figures, and consists principally of maize - which in our country is harvested twice a year - meat, milk products, cattle on the hoof, and fruits and vegetables necessary for the daily diet in the West Indian islands. This area is served by a vessel of 3,450 gross tons, accommodating 200 passengers in three classes and 1,000 tons of cargo, which has started operating between the

/Netherlands West Indies

Netherlands West Indies and New York. Other vessels with similar accomodation will be put into service for the tourist trade.

THE TOURIST TRADE

In our economic development the tourist trade has very promising prospects. The nature of the island, which so fascinated the Discoverer of America, offers the tourist wonderful scenery, both in winter and in summer, in the mountain valleys which rise to 1200 m. above sea level. On the coast there are delightful beaches, and both the Atlantic in the north and the Caribbean in the south offer the joys of deep-sea fishing.

In San Domingo, first city of the New World, the genius of Spain has imprinted indelibly on the religious, civil and military architecture the stamp of its civilizing power. The capital of the Dominican Republic is thus a shrine of Spanish-American culture.

The Government's tourist programme includes the building of a chain of hotels from Ciudad Trujillo to Valle de Constanza, 1200 m. above sea level.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND POWER

The industrial handling of cocoa, one of the principal products of our country, and its exportation in bars are clearly of mutual benefit to foreign consumers and local labour.

The rivers of the country are rich in water power. Three important rivers rise in the Cordillera Central. One of them flows for 400 km. to the Atlantic in the north; another, 200 km. long, flows to the Caribbean Sea in the south; and a third flows to Samaná Bay in the east. On the first, which serves as a waterway for the timber that is so abundant, the Dominican Government is building a dam which will rise 130 m. above the river level and have a capacity of 75,000 h.p. or 60,000 kilowatts.

Drillings are also being made in areas showing indications of oil.

IMMIGRATION

At the Evian Conference the Dominican Government offered to accept 100,000 European immigrants. Several agricultural settlements have been established in the country for aliens and Dominican citizens, who have been given full title to plots of land and have received houses, domestic animals, seeds, equipment, manure, fertilizer and the like on long-term credit. They have also been given facilities for transporting their products. Since 1940 a colony of European Jewish refugees has been thriving on fertile land with a port as an outlet for their farm products and livestock and a mountain resort for their holidays.

In our traditional system of social democracy the right of property

/has never

has never been denied to aliens, no discrimination has been imposed between citizens and aliens, and no exchange control exists.

Property reform has been enacted on the basis of the Torrens system, and more than two million hectares have been distributed to poor peasants.

SOCIAL LAWS

Social Security is obligatory, and the worker is guaranteed a minimum wage and holidays with pay. The social improvement areas set up by the Government provide the further advantages of hospitals, recreation clubs, athletic fields, schools, churches, and comfortable low-cost housing.

In the urban and rural areas, constant and energetic health campaigns have produced positive results. Social security and the other organizations devoted to social assistance and insurance are increasing their beneficial activities daily. The physical and mental health of the inhabitants receives very special attention from the Government. School enrolments this year amount to 243,305 pupils in 3,000 State educational institutions, and the public works programme includes port facilities and improvements, water systems, sewers, and electrical power plants in thirty-one cities of the country, where during one day last May seven water systems, with a capacity of four million gallons and containing some 158 km. of domestically-manufactured pipe, were opened at a cost of more than $4,000,000.

Mr. Chairman: The delegation of the Dominican Republic joins in the fervent hopes created by the Economic Commission for Latin America, and expresses the wish that the Commission direct its studies toward the co-ordination of our national economies, without exclusive bilateral agreements, in accordance with the Pan-American motto: All for one and one for all.
