I wish first of all to express my personal gratification and the deep appreciation of us all here present to the Acting Minister of Foreign Relations, Senor Torres Bodet, who has been good enough to give us some of his valuable time to attend this opening session of our conference and to address a few remarks to us. I wish also to express our appreciation to the Chief of the Diplomatic Section, Chief of the Consular Section, and to Lic. Armendariz del Castillo, the Chief of Ceremonial, of the Ministry, whose unfailing courtesy and attention to so many of our problems we all know.

Various Secretaries of State, since the beginning of the present century, and under their impulse the officers of the Department of State, have endeavored to improve the organization of our representatives abroad, the quality of the personnel serving in the various capacities in establishments of our government in other countries, and to improve in general the effectiveness of our machinery for the conduct of our foreign relations. In this task the various Secretaries of State and the Department of State have had the unfailing support of the President of the United States who is charged under our Constitution with the conduct of our foreign relations. As a result of this interest, the organization of the Department in Washington has been constantly adapted to the changing character and needs of our foreign relations in these changing times. As a result of legislation enacted by the Congress, the Foreign Service of the United States has been considerably improved and is now on what we may call a recognized definite career status. The quality of our representation abroad as a result of these executive, legislative, and administrative steps has been greatly improved.

In order to bring about uniformity of practice in our diplomatic and consular establishments abroad, and in order to give an opportunity for the principal diplomatic and consular officers to exchange views with the intent of improving such practice, the Department of State began some years ago the practice of bringing together the principal Foreign Service officers in certain areas of the world, at intervals of two years or more, for the purpose of bringing about such uniformity of practice and exchange of views. Such conferences have been held therefore at intervals for a number of years in various places in Europe and in the American Republics. Last year we had a meeting of the Foreign Service officers of the Caribbean in Havana, following other meetings held there in previous years. We are now met again here in Mexico City for the purpose of bringing together the principal Foreign Service officers of our government in Mexico, following similar meetings held in this country in 1929, 1931, 1934, 1936, 1937 and 1940.

I shall tell you frankly that one of the principal reasons for this conference in Mexico City at this time is the desire which I have felt to become personally acquainted with the principal officials of our government in Mexico as early as possible during my stay in this country. I have had the pleasure of working with some of you before. I know your devotion to and your understanding of your duties.
duties and your responsibilities. I have wanted this opportunity as early in my stay here in order that we should all know each other better so that in our correspondence and in our official communications among us all, there should be that personal touch and understanding which add so much in so many ways, not only to the effectiveness of our performance of our duty, but also to the personal satisfaction which we get out of it.

Therefore, while we shall during our meetings here this week discuss many problems which arise in our daily work for the purpose of getting uniformity of understanding and completeness of comprehension of our work, we shall also have this opportunity of getting to know each other better and for this reason we are avoiding any formal entertainment during the meeting so that there may be the most complete opportunity for personal contact. This I know that all of us will not fail to use.

Under our system of Foreign Service organization, the Embassy acts in a supervisory capacity over the Consular establishments of our government in Mexico in order to aid the Department of State in Washington in its supervisory and administrative function. The responsibilities falling upon the Department of State in Washington are increasingly great. It is my desire that the exercise of the supervisory functions of the Embassy should be carried through in such a way as to lessen as far as this may be possible the burdens in this respect falling upon the Department. In this I am sure that we shall have the complete cooperation of all of our officers in Mexico.

It so happens that this is the first Foreign Service Officers conference which has been held when our country is at war. I need not say, therefore, that all of us have an even increased sense of our responsibility to our government and to our people in this time of struggle for the maintenance of democratic institutions and of decency and order throughout the world. Our Foreign Service officers have been distinguished among our public servants over a long period of years for their singular devotion to duty and for their comprehension of their responsibilities, knowing no hours and no limit to their efforts. That you will respond therefore in the most adequate manner to the serious responsibilities resting upon us these days, I have no doubt whatever.

One of the things which we in the Americas and in the democracies are fighting to maintain these days is the principle of mutuality of interest and mutuality of respect of sovereignty and individual rights and liberties. This period of strife, therefore, only accentuates for us one of our primary responsibilities and obligations, which is that of realizing that as Foreign Service officers of our government abroad we are charged with the responsibility of improving, strengthening and broadening our relationships with the governments and peoples of the countries in which we have the privilege of serving. The relationships between states cannot rest on any firm or enduring basis unless they are established on a basis of mutual respect, understanding and comprehension. There is no solution which can be arrived at between states, whatever its nature, whether it be political or economic, which can be enduring or fruitful in the interests of both countries unless it is equitable and keeps in mind the mutuality of interests always involved in such solutions. We as Foreign Service officers,
officers, therefore, working in this friendly republic and among these friendly people have in some respects a dual responsibility - that to our own government and people and that to the government and people of the country which receives us so courteously and so hospitably. We shall always have to remember, as I know that we do, that we are living and working in a friendly country and that we have responsibilities to the people among whom we work as well as to our own people. This responsibility we can carry through if we have a proper attitude of understanding and comprehension.

We in Mexico who have the privilege of serving our government here have a special responsibility in the family of the Americas, among which there now exist these common ties and aspirations and common determinations. Mexico and the United States for geographical and many other reasons have to play an important role. In many ways the economics of the two nations can and may further compliment each other. The well-being of the Mexican people is as important to us in the United States as the well-being of our people is to the Mexican people. There is no fundamental reason, and no reason which can influence thoughtful and unprejudiced persons, why in the economic field we should not broaden and strengthen our relationships to the mutual advantage of both peoples. There is no reason why in the political field our relationship should not be one of the most complete accord, for we have the same basic aspirations, among which is the desire to maintain the sovereignty of our governments and the liberties and well-being of our peoples. Mexico and the United States and all of the Americas have in times of peace forged this unity among them and it is the surest guaranty of the victory and of our enjoyment and our children's enjoyment of the fruits thereof. That unity has been strengthened in the face of the common danger and struggle. As that unity was forged in times of peace, consolidated in times of war, it is a happy augury for the future that a united America after the victory will be one of the most powerful influences, if not the most powerful, in assuring for ourselves and for the world that peace and that opportunity to cultivate all the arts of peace to which we are dedicated. In this family of the Americas, Mexico and our country will know how to play their part to the enduring advantage of their peoples. You have, my colleagues, an extraordinary opportunity to make your contribution in your daily work in these fateful times to this great end.

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to this Embassy and I look forward with much pleasure to the exchange of views which we shall be able to have during this week.