

1500

*Telegraphic report of remarks
made by the Ambassador*

how
I really don't know ~~xxx~~ to meet this subject of our relations with Mexico, because there is so much that could be said in resume, and so much has been said concerning the actual situation. I think that you are familiar with the various steps which Mexico has taken. She prides herself in her military advance which has been made public, by the President, outlining step by step the acts of the Mexican Government, showing ~~that~~ over a period of several years ~~showing~~ its attitude to the Democratic ideas and ideals. If one were to read the whole text , it would present a very interesting and somewhat convincing picture. So far as the attitude of the Mexican Government is concerned today, I think a very brief statement is sufficient to interpret the record. However, all the realistic determination of the attitude of the Government must be based on its acts and not on its declarations.

I have been here only a few months, and in those few months, my contact with the high officers of the Mexican Government have not been as frequent, and in some cases as intense as I would like it to have been. That, however, has not been our fault. We have had, in the very short time that I have been here, questions of importance discussed, and I am leaving out entirely the oil question, which is one that cannot be discussed with the Mexican Government. We receive practically every day telegrams from the Department as well as from other agencies of our Government requestn g Mexico to comply with the obligations which have been taken under the Inter-American relations with respect to the war.

I think that I can say in simple terms that in the two months or more that I have been here, I have not approached the Mexi can Government for cooperation in any manner which we have not received to the degree that could be expected.

In the beginning there have been occasions when we have asked ~~some~~ the Mexican Government to take ~~in any case~~ steps which I doubt we could reasonably expect them to take because, after all, Mexico is not a belligerent, while we ~~are~~ a belligerent country, and we do everything from ~~that~~ the point of view of a belligerent country. But even when we have asked, on these occasions, the Mexican Government give collaboration beyond and has responded by indicating that it is willing to do the thing we have asked in a different form and in no case have we received a refusal ~~from the Mexican~~ so far as the Government is concerned.

You have been told the situation this morning by Mr. Gibson who has long been here, and Mr. Finley, who has been here a shorter time, but who has grasped the Mexican situation in that time. I have nothing to add to that general picture, which they have so well interpreted.

We have had a picture of the present personalities in the Government. We have had contact with practically all of them of a sufficient character to be able to form, at least preliminary impressions as to their convictions, sincerity, understanding and a general comprehension of their attitude to the war from Mexico and the Continent, and I can express that feeling best by saying that I think the general condition is as good as we could wish and better than we could have hoped for.

I have been here too short a time to feel that my opinions on certain things are worth very much, but I should say that in view of the international situation which Mexico has to deal with in the way of understanding of the war and in view of its historical background and other features, the position which the Mexican Government has taken is one which involves a good deal of courage and certainly involves a good ~~xx~~ deal of

understanding on the part of its leaders. So far as the President of the Republic is concerned, although trained in a military sense, he has been a good deal of a student at military strategy and military operations, and learns a good deal

and of very considerable native intelligence and sound judgment. He has, for reasons other than we, for there must be reasons which I do not know, an unusual knowledge of what this war means. There have been many people who have been very slow to learn what the war means, and if the President of Mexico did not know what the war means, there would not be anything unusual or to his discredit, but he does know and I think that he has definitely made up his mind that the future of Mexico depends upon the victory of the United Nations. There is no doubt but that the deciding factor in President Avila Camacho's decision to take the stand he has, ~~and~~ comes from the fact that he believes that Mexico's interests lie completely and solely with the defeat of the Axis nations, but in addition to that, there is no doubt that there is a certain fineness of character and spirit in the President which would include him toward that attitude. So far as the United States is concerned, I do not know what the inner sentiments of the President are; I do not know to what degree his historical background may influence him, but I am convinced of one thing

of that character did not influence in any of his official or private acts. It is important to note that one of the keenest observers in our country, and a hardheaded man, who recently spent three weeks in this country and moved about a bit, and arrived with considerable prejudice in respect to the Mexican Government. With respect to this attitude, and with respect to the Mexican Government, he told me this morning that the thing that had impressed him most during his stay here, is the General convictions of the people, and what he believes to be the strength of the President in Governmental organizations.

of the country. The President does not hesitate in conversations private or otherwise, always in the terms of "we". He does not say "you should", or "it should be done", but invariably speaks of military strategy and conditions of the war as "we". Mr. Taylor and I had a conversation with the President this morning, in which he did not speak of military strategy, but did speak of the war. There are in the Mexican Government still certain officials of the Government who, while they would prefer the United Free Nations to win the war, are not so sure that they will win, and have been influenced very largely in their personal attitudes which they have taken of fear and uncertainty with respect to the outcome of the war. That attitude is influenced by an attitude which has been found in many cases whereby it is believed that by taking such an attitude toward an Axis ~~victory~~ victory, gains may be obtained for their country or themselves. They might be able, in case of an Axis victory, to keep their head and their . That attitude, I am glad to say, in spite of the fact that the war still continues in a character that is disturbing to the people who ~~xxx~~ have not a full comprehension, is very much changed. And I do not know of a single responsible member of the Mexican Government who has not expressed that idea; that is, that Mexico would gain something by taking that attitude. That is a development of recent months and there are a number of factors which have contributed to it. The position of the Mexican Government is particularly apt in taking forward steps. I only want to make you observe that we have come to be very understanding about this. In our own Government at home we were unable to take the steps we knew we should take because we had to contend with hostile public opinion and the steps forward which we should have taken were nullified, because every time we took a step forward, we took three steps back. Remembering that, let's have an understanding of the Mexican people and of the Mexican Government. There are a few of us who think, "why does not Mexico declare war,"

What objective would be gained at this moment by the Mexican Government declaring war. Would it be advantageous for Mexico at this time to take that step as if they took a forward step and had to take three steps back now. It would be most unfortunate if Mexico were obliged to take a step backward.

with the President and High officials

In conversations/it has been demonstrated how keen they are to move forward. I will give you an illustration, which in itself is insignificant, but it points to the fact

Some ten days or two weeks ago I was given a dinner at the country club, and I prepared a little speech which was really directed more to our own people. When recognizing that it might be published by the Mexican presss, I said certain things that might be helpful, and After I made the speech I forgot about it, and to my surprise three papers had the speech in full. That, I think, indicates that the press is not altogether controlled; they did not have to give space to a speech of that kind. What I am trying to say is that some days after I was told by two officers in the cabinet that the President had asked them to express to me his appreciation of what I had said, as it was helpful in the program as I was trying to bring the Mexican people forward.

So far as the war and the defense work is concerned, I can only repeat that the Mexican Government is cooperating with us, not only as a and is giving us help in a way much beyond the former attitude which they had taken.

So far as production is concerned, Mexico has shown

1500

- 6 -

a willingness to aid in the increase of production of materials, raw materials, so desperately needed by us and in everything, except certain forms of military which would involve a belligerent stand.

The President spoke of trade agreements in ~~XXXXXX~~ terms and with a knowledge which I think was a surprise to Mr. Taylor. He showed the great concern which most of the American Governments have with regard to useful and referred to the fact that any prosperity or increase in trade relations might have its disadvantages. It was obvious that this trade agreement was definitely a stabilizing influence in our trade relations, which he observed was, after all, a solid basis for the continuance of good relations.

The war has brought a sense of responsibility ~~inxxx~~ not only to us, but to a good many of our neighbors