

Mexico, July 8, 1942

Dear Philip:

I have your letter of July 6th with regard to the meeting of the Congress on the evening of July 3rd, to do honor to the United States and to the American Republics. I had telephoned you about this matter as I had been told the telegrams to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House would be dispatched before the meeting, and the inference was left that they hoped they would have a reply to be read during the session. It was good of you to give this matter the effective attention which you did.

What happened of course was that our Mexican friends changed their minds without letting us know. Instead of sending telegrams before the meeting, as they had planned, they decided that the telegrams should be approved at the formal session of the Permanent Committee on the evening of July 3rd. My assumption therefore is that they were sent after the meeting that evening. The proposed telegrams to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House were read at the formal meeting on the evening of July 3rd, but there has been no official transmission of copies to the Embassy.

We have sent a despatch to the Department reporting on the session. The significance of the act of course lay in the fact that they should do it, rather than in the form that it took. The Congress not being in session, the Permanent Committee of the Congress, which is composed of fourteen Senators and fifteen Representatives, decided to hold this session. Their first idea was to hold it on July 4th and to have it solely as a tribute to the United States. It was finally decided to have it on the night of July 3rd, as there was such a crowded program on July 4th. It was also decided that while the American Ambassador was to be the guest of honor at the meeting, which was to be primarily in honor of the United States, the names  
of

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of the other American Republics would be associated with it. This was much wiser and I indirectly helped to direct the ceremony into this form.

The meeting was held in the Chamber of Deputies. The flags of the 21 Republics were brought in with full honors. The chiefs of mission of all the American Republics and the United Nations were invited and present. Practically all the members of the Permanent Committee and most of the Senators and Representatives who are in town were present. The speeches made were most effective and enthusiastic, and of course agreeable hearing for us. When one thinks of the status of our relations only a short time back, it is really a significant thing that the Mexican Congress should through this Permanent Committee hold a celebration of the 4th of July.

The 4th itself was a hectic day. At 9:30 I had to go to a ceremony for the naming of one of the leading avenues in honor of Benjamin Franklin. The Chief of the Federal District, Rojo Gómez, spoke; after which Lombardo Toledano made a harangue which lasted one hour and a half, and I had to sit through it, as my speech was to follow over the radio. I was on pins and needles during Toledano's long speech, as I was to broadcast over the Blue Network to the United States at 12 o'clock, and saw that I could not make it. I could not leave in the middle of Toledano's speech, as it would have been considered an insult by the some thousands of workers who were in the audience. As a consequence, Ray read my speech for the United States over the Blue Network, and I am sure that some of my friends at home who may have heard the broadcast were wondering what had happened to my voice. Ray did it very well. I fortunately got to the broadcasting station in time to be able to make the broadcast to South America which I had been asked to make.

At 2 o'clock I had a luncheon for the members of the Cabinet and for the chiefs of mission and for the Foreign Office personnel and their wives. There were some 92 guests for a sit-down luncheon in the Residence, which went very well. In the evening there was the usual dinner at the American Club and Padilla and I spoke. Padilla really made a splendid address.

In the afternoon Padilla made a broadcast to South America, and I believe to the United States, at 4 o'clock. The text of the address was very fine.

There was the usual celebration by the Colony at the  
Reforma

Reforma Club, but I was not able to go as I was occupied with these other things; but my wife was able to go out.

We had scores of telegrams from all over Mexico on the occasion of the 4th, and I understand that this is the first time that this has happened in the memory of anyone here.

I think we can take this interest of Mexico in the celebration of the 4th as symptomatic in a very considerable measure of the change which has taken place in the situation here. I do not mean to say that the people are overflowing with love for us, but there has been a very decided change. I am hopeful that we will be wise enough, all of us, here and at home, to know how to solidify this position, and I am happy to say that I think we are on the way to doing so.

With very good wishes, believe me

Cordially and faithfully yours,

G S MESSERSMITH

P/s:

I did not have the reception in the Embassy on the 4th of July, which has been customary here in the past, at least during Mr. Daniels' time. I did this for a number of reasons, but principally the following: My understanding is that the Americans here and the Mexicans had practically stopped going to this reception as the Residence was simply filled with thousands of tourists who were in the city. The result was that those for whom the reception was intended among the American Colony had so difficult a time in getting into the Residence that most had abandoned coming. As I see no reason for holding a reception for tourists, I decided not to have the reception, but this luncheon instead, and I am sure it was the wise thing to do. Now that the Embassy is practically completely furnished and all the repairs completed, I am hoping to have a reception for the American Colony here in the near future.

GM:KOT