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Sierra Paracaima 1285

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February 18, 1955

My dear Mr. Praet:

Mr. Maryssael's secretary called me up today, as he is out of the city, to tell me that he had a telegram from you asking whether a telegram which you had sent to me had been received. I am terribly sorry that I was so late in replying to your telegram, but I was in Cuernavaca longer than I intended and I replied to you as soon as I came back. I have left instructions here at the house that only telegrams of certain character and of a family character are to be sent to me while I am in Cuernavaca. That is why the telegram was not sent to me there. In any event, by this time you have received my telegram and I am sure the copy of the letter that I wrote to Mr. Saladrigas.

I did not write directly to Mr. Martinez Saenz, the President of the Banco Nacional of Cuba, as while I feel sure I know him, I am not sure that I recall him and thought it was better to say to Mr. Saladrigas that it would be desirable for him to arrange for you to see Mr. Martinez Saenz. I wonder whether you have seen Lopez Castro, the Minister who is in charge of these economic matters now, I understand. He is a very clever man, but as I think I told you, inclined to be a little difficult. He and I were very good friends although we differed about a lot of things, but we have a lot of mutual respect for each other. I should be glad to write him at any time that it may be desirable or that you may think it desirable.

I will also at some stage, if you think it useful, be glad to write a note to President Batista.

The Mr. Lathrop whom I told you was in Mexico in connection with this Mexican company which is making all kinds of paper products except news print out of bagasse, had unfortunately left Mexico City for the United States before I could see him. He will therefore I think not be here when you may be in Mexico City, but you can get in touch with him in the United States, or somebody whom you will designate can get in touch with him, as I think he is really somebody to talk with about the technical aspects of the various processes to make paper products out of bagasse.

One of the things, as I told you, which intrigues me very much is that there has been this interest in Mexico in quite a number of quarters in making news print out of bagasse. News print is expensive

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here, as it is elsewhere, and as plenty of bagasse is now available in various parts of the country in sufficient quantity for making products, there have really been serious studies and efforts to make news print out of bagasse here. What intrigues me, as I have already told you, is that up to now the one mill which is using bagasse as a basis is not making news print. That seems to me a fair indication that they have not found any of the processes so far for using bagasse for news print really economically feasible and commercially practical.

I am told that even in making the kraft papers from bagasse here in Mexico they import 30% of the basic material in the form of wood pulp from the United States or from Canada. The French process which is spoken of in the correspondence which Mr. Brosens sent me indicates that there may be some new aspects of the matter which make the making of news print out of bagasse more feasible.

Mr. Maryssael's secretary tells me that in your telegram to him you stated that you would be here early in March and I look forward very much to seeing you, and I hope that while you are here that you will be able to spend a weekend with us in Cuernavaca. There are some people here who I think can tell you a good deal of what has been done with bagasse in Mexico so far and of the studies that were made with regard to news print.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

George S. Messersmith

Mr. Praet:

Mr. Messersmith asked that I send this to you without his having read or signed it, as he was leaving for Cuernavaca.

Carolyn B. Czitrom  
Secretary