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AIRMAIL

Habana, May 21, 1941.

Dear Warren:

I am sure that the delays in the completion of the contract for the sugar arrangement were as disappointing to you as they were to us. We had looked forward to seeing you here by this time and were hoping that things would work out so that you could stop on your way back to Washington. The contract is now in the Bank in Spanish and in English and I hope that there may be no further delays and that our lawyer friends will not make any difficulties about the approval so that the signature may be proceeded with. We have the whole arrangement so tied up in all of the major details that I think some of the minor points are very secondary and should not interfere with the signing of the contract.

I called Mr. Clayton on the telephone yesterday as I was not sure that you had come back and he told me that you had just arrived a day or two before. I am sure that you have had a hectic but most interesting and useful trip.

I know that you will not be very eager to leave Washington immediately to come down here for any number of reasons but I do hope that you can come here in the very near future. The Minister of State spoke to me yesterday and the day before about the desire of the Cuban Government to make progress on the draft of the authorizing act which the Congress must pass for the \$25,000,000 credit and also on the contract in which the details will be covered. I think the next step is up to us and we will be giving great disappointment here generally if we do not facilitate progress as much as possible. Mr. Clayton tells me that he has

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The Honorable  
Warren L. Pierson,  
President, Export-Import Bank,  
Washington.

turned over to you my letter to him of May 15 and also the copy of the letter which I wrote to Wheeler in Agriculture on the same day. These are self-explanatory and I will not go into further detail.

I do hope, however, that you will be able to come down in the immediate future to sign the loan contract for the sugar arrangement. We will be missing a good bet if we do not make a ceremony of this. At the same time you can begin the initial contact with the Cubans in the Cabinet on the draft law authorizing the \$25,000,000 credit and go into some of the principal matters involved in the approval of projects, etc. It would be fine if you can bring Wheeler with you and someone who can talk on public works projects. This would open the initial contact in the right way and we would get a lot of ground cleared in a few days. I think if you could plan to stay here for a week, it would be extraordinarily helpful. If Mrs. Pierson comes with you, we would love to have you stay at the house with us while you are here. The weather has been fine here but, of course, I cannot guarantee that.

I think the important thing is to get started and to get started right and in order to do that we simply must have the right kind of people make the contact. Our position here is so good and the Cuban attitude is so good that we cannot cause deception by delays and, of course, there can be no progress until we establish this contact and talk over some major aspects. Then the drafting can go ahead very rapidly of the authorizing act and of the contract.

I am sending you herewith a letter which came for you from the Bank.

If there is anything you wish to talk over with me immediately, I would appreciate your calling me on the telephone. In fact, I would appreciate your calling me on the receipt of this letter as I must be in a position to give some information to the Cuban Government without delay. They have kept down

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speculation and comment in the press but naturally everyone is eagerly looking forward to some development.

With every good wish to you and Mrs. Pierson from us both,

Cordially yours,

George S. Messersmith

Enclosure.