

Mexico, D. F., October 8, 1945

My dear Friend:

I cannot tell what satisfaction it gave to me while I was in Washington recently to convey to you over the telephone the information which we had just received from Mexico City to the effect that the Senate of Mexico had approved the water treaty between the United States and Mexico by unanimous vote and in the form in which it had been approved by our own Senate. It gave me particular satisfaction to convey this information to you as I know how constructively and effectively you worked in bringing about this treaty which is of such transcendental importance in the relationships between our country and Mexico.

Concerning the approval of the treaty by the Mexican Senate there was no doubt; but some of us had been a good deal concerned that as a matter of prestige and as a sop to certain currents of opinion in Mexico, some of the Senators in Mexico might insist in the addition of reservations, as our own Senate had done. This, of course, would have been most unhappy and would have injured the treaty and the possibilities of a final exchange of ratifications. I, personally, was confident as a result of the conversations which I had with the President of Mexico and with high officials of the Mexican Government that they realized the undesirability of the Mexican Senate adding any reservations to the treaty. It was, nevertheless, with a good deal of relief that I learned of the action of the Mexican Senate in approving the treaty in the exact form it had been approved by our Senate.

While I believe that there is general understanding in the United States and in Mexico in informed quarters of the great importance of this treaty, the real implications thereof are not sufficiently widely understood

The Honorable

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Tom Connally, Chairman,
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in either quarter. The settlement of the petroleum expropriations by the exchange of notes in November 1941, and the settlement of the agrarian claims and general claims by an exchange of notes on the same day in November 1941 marked a tremendous advance in the relationships between the two countries. Such settlements would not have been possible unless there had been a very great change in the relationships between the United States and Mexico. The settlement of the long standing water question, however, which had been the source of so much friction and so much misunderstanding and which was accentuating ill feeling has a much greater significance in the relationships between the two countries than either the settlement of the agrarian and general claims or of the petroleum expropriations. The treaty is the most significant act in the relationships between the two countries during a period of many years. That it should have been possible to settle so long standing and so difficult a question through an entirely equitable negotiated instrument which received such broad approval by the Senate of both countries is characteristic of a new era in Mexican-American relationships and I think will have repercussions in all of the Americas and should have in the whole world, as it proves that there is no question so difficult, so involved and so technical, and of such long standing which cannot be settled by negotiation and an entirely equitable arrangement, if there is a real desire on the part of both countries concerned to arrive at an equitable settlement.

The drafting of such a treaty and all that is involved in connection with its approval by the Congress is a task which involves the work of many understanding and capable people in both countries, and this is particularly true of such a treaty as this water treaty. In my opinion, however, although many have contributed to this important contribution to the consolidation of the relationships between the United States and Mexico, no one person has made a greater and more constructive contribution than you have. In your capacity as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, you made an outstanding contribution not only in your capacity as Chairman of that important Committee but also because of your understanding of the substance and implications of the treaty. I wish to

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congratulate you on the significant and constructive part which you played in this great achievement which is so much in the mutual interest of both countries.

I think I told you at the time of the approval of the treaty by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that to me the proceedings of the Committee and the attitude of most of its members was one of the most encouraging features of our democratic processes to which we are so much attached, which I had observed for years. The members of the Senate Committee showed an extraordinary understanding of the substance of this treaty and the importance of it, and far be it from me to be so presumptuous as to congratulate the members of the Committee and of the Senate as to the action which they took on this treaty. As a plain American citizen, I think it is not presumptuous for me to say that it gave me tremendous satisfaction to note the considered, wise, and understanding way in which this treaty was dealt with by the members of the Committee and our Senate.

Now that both our Senate and the Mexican Senate have approved the treaty, there remains the exchange of ratifications which according to the treaty has to take place in Washington. I took the liberty while I was in Washington to say in the Department that I thought it would be desirable to have a ceremony in Secretary Byrnes' office to which some significance can be given. I think we should not miss this opportunity, for the treaty really has a tremendous significance not only in our relationships with Mexico but in all of the Americas and I believe it points the way to other countries as to the manner in which such disputes can be settled in a equitable manner through negotiation and understanding.

My understanding is that the exchange of ratifications is to take place in Washington some time towards the end of October or in the first week of November. I have suggested to the Department that Mr. Lawson, who is our member of the Boundary Commission, and Mr. MacGregor, who is the Mexican member, should be invited to come up for the brief ceremony in Secretary Byrnes' office. I have also suggested that you of course should be present, but this is a matter, of course, as Chairman of the Senate Committee. I have also taken the liberty of suggesting that Joe McGurk, who is now our

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Ambassador in the Dominican Republic should be asked to come up for it, as he made such constructive contributions to the drafting of the treaty. Dr. Tamm, in the Department of State, who has worked so industriously and effectively on the treaty should also be asked to be present. Whether other members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations should be asked to attend is beyond my competence, but I do hope very fervently that you will be present at this little ceremony.

As I signed the treaty together with the then Secretary Hull, the Department has suggested that I come up for the ceremony of exchange of ratifications which I shall be very glad to do, and I look forward to seeing you then.

I regretted very much to leave Washington before seeing Secretary Byrnes, but it was absolutely necessary for me to be in Mexico City on October 6. I was very much occupied the last two days of my stay and regret that I did not have the opportunity to call on you again as I so much wished to do.

Mrs. Messersmith joins me in all good wishes to you and Mrs. Connally.

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH