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AIR MAIL

Habana, Cuba,
May 15, 1941.

Dear Sumner:

I dislike to burden you with reading, but I feel that I must send you copies of two personal notes of May 15th - one to Wheeler of Agriculture, and the other to Clayton of the Export-Import Bank with which I sent him a copy of the letter to Wheeler.

I think you will agree that it is most important that we not lose time in making the \$25,000,000 credit begin to become operative. At the best, progress will be somewhat slow and we wish to avoid any disillusionment.

I think we should try to urge on the Bank to send some competent and responsible person down here without delay to help in drafting the authorizing act to be enacted by the Cuban Congress, and to draft the contract for the loan which will be a complicated document at the best. The Bank may prefer to have this done in Washington, but I must depend on you to help to make it clear to the Bank that this is one job which must be done here, as to try to do it in Washington will create innumerable delays and difficulties. I think you will also agree with the suggestion made by the Cuban Government, and which I have strongly supported in my despatches to the Department and in the accompanying letters, to the effect that the Bank send down without delay a man of competence and standing who can discuss agricultural projects, and a man who can discuss public works projects, as the preliminary contact will be with this committee set up by the Cuban Government which consists of Cortina, Saladrigas, Domingo y Morales del Castillo, López Castro, and García Montes. It is desirable that the two men who come down for the Bank should be men of standing and competence and of some authority. If the Bank sends down two men like this for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of a month, a lot of preliminary work can be done and, what is more important, we will get the right start. It would, of course, be desirable if each of these two men, when he comes, would be accompanied by the more technical men who will remain on here. This will assure that the permanent men have all the background as they would be in the conversations from the start.

So far as

The Honorable
Sumner Welles,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

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So far as Agriculture is concerned, it will be tremendously helpful if Wheeler could come. So far as public works is concerned, I have no suggestion, but some one of Wheeler's competence in his field should be sent.

You who know of the importance of establishing right contact here at the start through the right people, and the importance of beginning a matter of this kind in the right way, will appreciate all that I have in mind without further explanation. I know, too, that you will agree that we should get started without delay. I hate to bother you with this detail, but it is an important detail, and I know that you can do so much to get this matter started right.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH.

Enclosures:

1. The Ambassador to
L.A. Wheeler,
May 15 (copy).
2. The Ambassador to
Mr. Clayton,
May 15 (copy).