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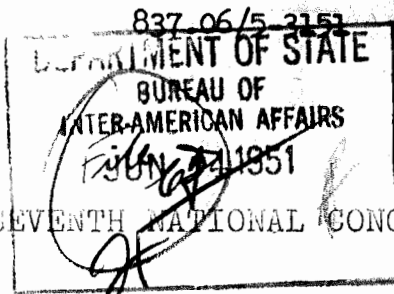
PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

TO : Department of State

FROM : HABANA 2376 May 31, 1951

REF : 000183 Labor Developments

SUBJECT : PRESIDENT PRIO INAUGURATES SEVENTH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF CUBAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION



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For Dept. only. JUN 4 ARA FR DCR OLI E UNA USUN AG COMM FRB LAB NLRB NSRB DPA FSA

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The Seventh National Congress of the Cuban Confederation of workers was inaugurated on the evening of May 28 with President PRIO, practically all members of the Cabinet, high Army and Navy officers, labor leaders and union delegates in attendance. The highlight of the evening was a speech by President Prio in which he dealt primarily with the unity of organized labor and the problems of the Cuban farmer (campesino).

The President pointed out that the present administration had taken positive steps to increase the price of farm products and to assure the farmer that he received a just share of the proceeds. He also referred to the recent tax law which provides that some five million pesos shall be set aside to purchase land and homes for poor farmers; to the newly created Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank which is authorized to provide easy credit terms to farmers; and to the decree extending maternity benefits to agricultural workers. He promised the campesinos that the Government would make every effort to raise their standard of living to the same level as the industrial workers.

The President then directed his speech to the radio audience, especially the employers. He said, "If we wish to maintain a democratic world and our present mode of living, we must realize that the workers have a right to participate in the proceeds of our industries, otherwise they will abandon democracy."

The President denied that the Government and the workers were trying to destroy Cuba's industry and commerce by their actions. He went on to say, "I have fought for the employers as few other presidents have. I have defended the sugar industry with high prices and have obtained international commercial treaties favorable to the Cuban textile, shoe and

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rubber industries." He added, "Since I have protected the rights of the employers, I am obliged to protect the rights of the workers and prevent their exploitation by the industrialists. The CTC, under the direction of Eusebio Mujal, has, during the past two years, developed into a powerful organization and the workers should be pleased with its accomplishments. If Mujal alone has been able to protect the workers, then with the collaboration of Cofiño and Rubiera, the working classes should be even more powerful and the Government will be able to deal with the true representatives of the proletariat (i.e., the CTC)."

President Frio urged Cuban capitalists to invest their money in new industries. He said that such action might put an end to the constant labor-management conflicts because "if there were more industries, there would be more work and without the fear of becoming unemployed, labor would be more conservative in its demands."

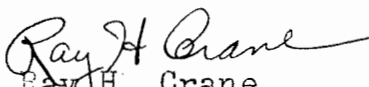
Comment:

The President's speech appeared to be primarily a recounting of the accomplishments of his administration, not only with respect to labor but also with respect to management (doubtless for political reasons). Certain phases of the speech, such as the mention of permitting the workers to participate to a greater extent in the profits, would almost lead one to believe he is preparing management for further inroads into the profits of industry.

It is interesting to note that there was no note of dissatisfaction with labor's attitude in the present speech, as was manifest in a recent discussion with leaders of the sugar industry (Habana's 2335 May 24, 1951).

Remarks of labor leaders and accomplishments of the Congress will be reported in detail after termination of the meetings.

For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:


Ray H. Crane,
Assistant Attaché.

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