

FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF  
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
MAR 15 1950  
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FROM : HABANA 551 March 11 1950

REF :

SUBJECT : LABOR NOTES, February 16-28, 1950.

Work at the Ward Line docks was disrupted for several days the latter part of February, when workers declared a strike in protest to the dismissal of three employees. The management of Ward Line instituted dismissal proceedings against the three employees, whom they claimed were guilty of promoting slow-down tactics among the stevedores, which had proven prejudicial to the company's as well as the workers' interests.

It is of interest to note that the stevedores did not support the strike action. All reports indicate they were willing to work but were unable to do so as the foremen and office workers were supporting the action. Although Gilberto GOLIATH, Secretary General of the Maritime Workers Federation, threatened to call a general strike of all Cuban port workers, if the three workers were not reinstated, such action was not taken. It is believed that the primary reason for his failure to carry out the threat was his fear that he would not receive the support of the stevedores, who are apparently satisfied with present working conditions and did not feel that the issue justified sympathy strike action.

Ward Line officials, union leaders and the Minister of Labor spent considerable time in conferences in an effort to reach a decision which would satisfy both labor and management. Ward Line maintained its attitude of refusal to reinstate the workers in view of their malefic influence on the workers. The union in turn steadfastly refused to permit the stevedores to return to work unless the Minister of Labor ruled favorably towards the workers. The stalemate continued for four days while perishable merchandise, destined for New York, was diverted to the ferry lines and shipped to Miami and thence by rail to New York.

On the third day of the strike the steamship company made formal application for permission to leave the port without completing the discharge of the cargo or without taking on additional freight. This permission was denied on the grounds that, according to Cuban customs regulations, no ship could be cleared until all cargo consigned to Cuban ports of entry had been discharged.

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The Minister of Labor finally resolved to suspend the dismissal proceedings until such time as a commission comprised of a representative of labor, management and the Ministry of Labor could study the facts of the case and submit its findings to the Minister of Labor. Both management and labor agreed to abide by the commission's decision. Under these conditions work was resumed.

#### Tobacco Workers' Congress

The Fourth National Congress of Tobacco Workers was held in Habana February 26-27, 1950. Some twenty-nine resolutions were passed during the Congress, of which the following are some of the more important:

1. To oppose any plans to mechanize the industry, which would tend to create a monopoly or which would restrict or in any way affect the production of hand-made cigars.
2. To intensify the propaganda in favor of Cuban tobacco in foreign countries.
3. To request the administration to create a wage subsidy for those tobacco workers who have been deprived of work since January 1948.

#### Labor Disturbance at Port of Batabanó

Port workers at the port of Surgidero de Batabanó have created a situation which could have serious effects on the Isla de Pinos' exports of fruits and vegetables. They refused to discharge a cargo of perishable fruits and vegetables destined for the United States market, recently, causing considerable financial losses to exporters. The situation may develop into one that will require the chartering of special ships to carry the merchandise directly to U.S. markets.

#### Textile Workers' Congress

The Fifth National Congress of Textile Workers was held in Habana February 26-28, 1950. The opening session of the Congress was attended by Dr. José MORELL Romero, Minister of Labor, Eusebio MUJAL, Secretary General of the CTC, and other prominent labor leaders. Dr. Morell Romero in his address to the delegates stated that he planned to strive for a better understanding between labor and management and that the textile workers could rest assured that their interests would be protected. He made no definite statement as to what his stand would be toward the continuance of subsidy payments to textile workers, but the tenor of his

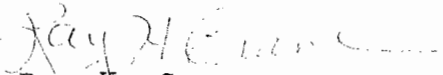
speech clearly indicated that no changes in the present policies of the administration were to be expected.

At the closing session of the Congress the working committees presented various recommendations. Among those approved by the plenary session were the following:

1. That the Executive Committee should undertake to make a complete study of the problems confronting the henequen workers and aid them in setting up an efficient organization which would eventually be affiliated with the National Textile Federation.
2. That the Executive Committee should request the Ministry of Labor to issue regulations governing the work which could be done by private individuals in their own homes.
3. That the Executive Committee should approve a minimum wage scale for workers in stocking factories for submission to the National Commission of Minimum Wages.
4. That the Executive Committee should request President Prio to extend Decree No. 1005 of March 25, 1949, which provides subsidy wage payments to all textile workers who are involuntarily deprived of work.
5. That an organization analagous to the Textile Subsidy Fund be created for henequen workers.
6. That the Executive Committee shall prepare plans for the creation of a Medical Center for textile and henequen workers.

At the final session of the Congress the Executive Committee for the coming year was elected. Among those elected were: Pascasio LINERA Lopez, Secretary General; Rolando O'FARRILL Cotanda, Alternate Secretary General; José LEMUS Calderi, Propaganda Secretary; and Quirico MIGOYA Naranjo, Alternate. In addition seventeen assistant secretaries were elected.

For the Ambassador:

  
Ray H. Crane  
American Vice Consul

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