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1378

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

May 13, 1954

DATE

REF : -

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SUBJECT: New Minister in Charge of Transport Appointed. FOR-10 CAB-
TR-3 1151A-10

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Decree No. 843 of April 27, 1954, published in the Official Gazette of April 28, 1954, accepted the resignation of Rafael DIAZ BALART (the father, not the son who is Under Secretary of the Interior) as Minister in Charge of Transport.

Decree No. 844 of April 27, 1954, published in the same edition of the Official Gazette, appointed Marino LOPEZ Blanco as Diaz Balart's successor. He took office on April 28, 1954.

Decree No. 881 of April 27, 1954, published in the Official Gazette of May 10, 1954, accepted the resignation of López Blanco as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Cuba and appointed Diaz Balart in the same capacity. The Embassy is given to understand by the Ministry of State that an assignment of Diaz Balart abroad is unlikely and that the ambassadorial designation may be temporary, possibly pending some other appointment in the Government.

Comment. While there may have been political reasons unknown to the Embassy behind Diaz Balart's resignation, it is possible that the difficulties in implementing and putting into effect Law-Decree No. 991 of 1953, which was intended to regulate transportation, may have had much to do with it. It was rumored earlier this year that Diaz Balart would resign because of presidential displeasure over his attitude regarding the regulation of transportation in Cuba. This rumor was denied by Diaz Balart but it may have contained an element of truth.

Diaz Balart is said to be an old friend of Batista from the President's birthplace of Banes and was one of the founders of Batista's political party, the Partido Acción Unitaria now known as the Partido Acción Progresista. His appointment as an ambassador has all the earmarks of being a complete "botella" or sinecure in which no work is expected for the salary paid. It is not unknown in the Cuban Foreign Service for a diplomatic appointment or even a foreign assignment to be given to an individual who does no work in connection with it and may never

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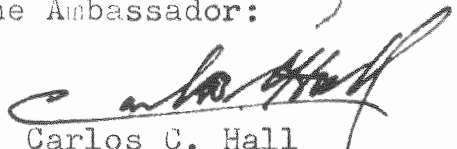
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leave Cuba. This would not be the first time that Batista has rewarded with such a sinecure the past services of an old collaborator who for one reason or another has lost the complete confidence of the President.

For the Ambassador:



Carlos C. Hall
Counselor of Embassy

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