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737.13/10-25

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, HABANA 572-
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. 2 encls.
REF : Habana's 547, Sept. 28, 1951; Habana's 527, Sept. 20, 1951
SUBJECT: Oscar GANS Appointed Prime Minister in Cabinet Reshuffle Announced October 1, 1951.

October 2 1951
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Air Bureau of State
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
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OCT 11

President PRIO on October 1 announced the new Cabinet to succeed the one that terminated its activities with the resignation of Prime Minister LANCIS on September 24, 1951.

A list containing the composition of the new Cabinet, the party affiliations of its members and previous service (if any) in the Cabinet is enclosed.

In the new Cabinet former Prime Minister Lancis becomes Secretary of Education. He is replaced as Prime Minister by Oscar GANS, former Minister of State (and prior thereto Minister of Justice). The State portfolio is taken over by Aureliano SANCHEZ Arango, former Minister of Education.

The only Ministers in the former Cabinet not included in the present one 1/ are the former Ministers of Interior Lomberto DIAZ and of Labor Arturo HERNANDEZ Tellaheche. These officers are replaced by Representatives Segundo CURTI as Minister of Interior and Edgardo BUTTARI as Minister of Labor. Both Curti and Buttari are former Cabinet members who resigned February 4, 1950 to run for Congress in the June 1, 1950 elections. Both were successful, Buttari being elected and Curti re-elected to the Cuban House of Representatives.

The only other new face in the Cabinet is that of José M. CASADO who was appointed Minister without Portfolio replacing Orlando PUENTE who was made a Minister without Portfolio on May 3, 1951 in addition to his duties as Secretary of the Presidency. The purpose of the appointment was to maintain the majority of non-congressmen in the Cabinet as required by the second paragraph of Article 126 of the Constitution. Prior to this appointment Casado was Under Secretary of Interior. Previously he had served as Minister of Interior under President GRAU.

1/ Orlando Puente is no longer a Minister without Portfolio, but remains as Secretary of the Presidency.

ETCrain:WJN

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PREPARATION TIME

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All members of the former Cabinet not mentioned above retain the portfolios held by them in the former Cabinet (including Antero RIVERO who was initially reported to have retired from the Cabinet). Dr. Jorge CASUSO who served as acting Minister of Justice following the transfer of Oscar GANS from Justice to the Ministry of State retains his ad interim status in the new Cabinet.

COMMENT:

The appointment of Oscar Gans as Prime Minister is interesting particularly in view of his recent statements to the Department 1/ to the effect that he expected to be Cuba's next President. The appointment is also of interest in view of the fact that the retiring Prime Minister is also a possible candidate for the presidency as is Minister without Portfolio Carlos HEVIA who has for long been considered the President's personal choice as a successor. The principal qualifications of LANCIS are his role as a moderating influence among the different PRC(A) sectors and the fact that he has no known enemies. Hevia is generally well regarded as an honest hard working official, but he has failed to arouse the enthusiasm of the electorate. Gans is less well known to the Cuban people than is Hevia and is probably not as popular. Like Hevia, Gans is not considered "simpático", a prime requisite for office seekers in Cuba. The reason for Gans' appointment as Prime Minister is therefore not very clear as yet. The appointment may have been made as an indication to the people that the Government's recently adopted policies 2/, which have not been well received by the people will be changed. The appointment may of course mean (though not necessarily) that Hevia has been dropped by the President as his choice for the presidential candidacy. It may also indicate that Lancis refused to continue as Prime Minister in order to disassociate himself from the Government's new policies. However, if this were the case he could have indicated his position more clearly by withdrawing from the Cabinet altogether.

ccH | The appointment of Aureliano Sánchez Arango as Minister of State comes as something of a surprise in view of his close identification in the past with activities affecting political relations between countries in the Caribbean area. While very agreeable to Guatemala it is considered that the Dominican Republic will take a dim view of his appointment as Minister of State.

1/ Mr. Wellman's letter of September 12, 1951.

2/ Despatch 539, Sept. 28, 1951.

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In his student days Sánchez Arango had close connections with the Communists in Cuba and he has been openly accused in the press of being a Communist. Apparently no evidence has ever been uncovered that he ever received a party card. In view of his past connections with the Communists Sánchez Arango has long been viewed with considerable suspicion, and the Embassy has therefore maintained his activities under close scrutiny. The Embassy's present opinion is that Sánchez Arango is now an anti-Communist. He is a close personal friend of President Prío and has been closely associated with him in politics over a period of many years. It is considered especially noteworthy that during his tenure as Minister of Education Sánchez Arango strongly encouraged the organization and development of an anti-communist teachers' association to crowd out the only other teachers' association then existing which was under communist domination and control.^{1/} Consequently, although Sánchez Arango has had quite a career of opposition to Governments in the Caribbean considered by him as 'dictatorial in character, the Embassy believes that from the point of view of Communism the United States Government will be able to work with the new Minister of State on a mutually satisfactory basis.

As reported above Segundo CURTI and Edgardo BUTTARI resigned as Ministers of Defense and Labor respectively in the spring of 1950 in order to run for Congress. Both Curti and Buttari are influential in the Habana organization of the PRC(A). When they failed to be reappointed to the Cabinet after the June 1, 1951 elections both became somewhat embittered against the President, identifying themselves with Senator Miguel SUAREZ Fernández, at that time (and possibly still) another strong contender for the PRC(A) presidential nomination. When Suárez Fernández bolted the Prío sector of the PRC(A) to go over to Grau's Cubanidad ^{2/} Buttari and Curti, especially the latter, could have created a serious problem for the President had they stuck with Suárez Fernández. They did not do so, however, announcing at the last minute that they would not follow him out of the PRC(A). It is possible that their appointment to the Cabinet at this time is in the nature of a pay-off for their loyalty to the President.

Apart from this there is the fact that, of all the Ministers in the Cabinet, probably Minister of Interior DIAZ and Minister of Labor Arturo HERNANDEZ were the two men in the Government most outstanding for their ability.

^{1/} See enclosed Memorandum from Cultural Attaché Jacob CANTER.
^{2/} Habana's 313, August 23, 1951.

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to keep the administration constantly on the defensive. In implementing the President's new policy of firmness as announced in his speech of September 19 1/ Díaz, as Minister of Interior, assumed responsibility for a number of actions that have proved extremely unpopular, one of these being the recent arrest of the editor and sub-editor of the newspaper El Crisol 2/.

The appointment of Arturo Hernández as Minister of Labor on October 27, 1950 came at a time when he was at the height of popularity due to his sponsorship of the famous "Ley Arturito" to give Christmas bonuses to Government employees. Probably the Government hoped, by giving him the Labor portfolio, to capitalize on his popularity among the workers. This it did to some extent. However, as time went on, Hernández became increasingly ineffective. This may have been due to Hernández' desire to retain his popularity with labor by giving in on every issue that arose; to the fact that he became increasingly dominated and overshadowed by MUJAL, Secretary General of the CTC, or that he was merely carrying out President Prío's policies and orders and that with a change in Prío's policies it became necessary to find a new Labor Minister having a stronger character and not too closely identified with the previous policy of appeasement.

General reaction to the new Cabinet is apathetic. Even the "new" members have had previous experience in the Cabinet. Observers are puzzled as to the significance of Gans' replacement of Lancís as Prime Minister. Sánchez Arango is not considered any improvement over Gans as Minister of State. To Sánchez' credit it must be said that dissatisfaction among politicians has been heard allegedly because Sánchez had cut political patronage in his "juicy" Ministry to the bone and that he was being transferred to a technical Ministry operating on a small budget for that reason. If so, the move reflects little credit on Lancís, the new incumbent in the Ministry of Education. There is some hope that the new Minister of Labor, backed by the President's new policies, may be able to improve the present unsatisfactory labor situation.

It will be noted that only government Auténticos were affected in the Cabinet re-shuffle. The Ministers of parties allied to the government PRC(A) were not touched. While this was foreseen it adds to the widespread conviction (freely admitted by government spokesmen) that the changes were made as a strategic, political move to

1/ Habana's 523, Sept. 25, 1951

2/ Embtel 235, Sept. 27, 1951

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strengthen the position of the government PRC(A) in the affiliatory and party re-organization period starting October 8. The moves appear particularly designed to mobilize the PRC(A) forces in Habana Province which is vital to the political future of the group now in power.

For the Ambassador:



Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures: *AH*

1. List of new Cabinet composition.
2. Memorandum from Cultural Attaché.

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REPUBLIC OF CUBA
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

	<u>Political affiliation</u>	<u>Date of appointment</u>
<u>PRIME MINISTER:</u> Dr. Oscar Gans y Martínez (1)	Auténtico	Oct. 1, 1951
<u>STATE:</u> Dr. Aureliano Sánchez Arango (2)	Auténtico	Oct. 1, 1951
<u>JUSTICE:</u> Dr. Jorge Casuso y Díaz Albertini (3)	REPUBLICANO	Oct. 1, 1951
<u>INTERIOR:</u> Mr. Segundo Curti Messina (4)	Auténtico	Oct. 1, 1951
<u>TREASURY:</u> Dr. José R. Alvarez Díaz	Auténtico	March 9, 1951
<u>PUBLIC WORKS:</u> Dr. Luis F. Casero Guillén	Auténtico	April 3, 1951
<u>AGRICULTURE:</u> Dr. Eduardo Suárez Rivas	LIBERAL	April 3, 1951
<u>COMMERCE:</u> Dr. Ramón Zaydin y Marquez Sterling	LIBERAL	April 3, 1951
<u>LABOR:</u> Dr. Edgardo Buttari y Puig (5)	Auténtico	Oct. 1, 1951
<u>EDUCATION:</u> Dr. Félix Lancís y Sánchez (6)	Auténtico	Oct. 1, 1951
<u>PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE:</u> Dr. José R. Andreu (2)	DEMOCRATA	April 3, 1951
<u>COMMUNICATIONS:</u> Dr. Sergio M. Mejías	Auténtico	Oct. 9, 1950
<u>NATIONAL DEFENSE:</u> Dr. Rubén de León y García (2)	Auténtico	Feb. 4, 1950
<u>MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO:</u> Srta. Mariblanca Sabas Alomá (2) Dr. Angel M. Ferro Dr. Juan Antonio Rubio Padilla (7) Dr. Antero Rivero y Morales Dr. José Manuel Casado Dr. Carlos Hevia (2)	Auténtico DEMOCRATA Auténtico DEMOCRATA Auténtico Auténtico	Oct. 10, 1948 June 22, 1950 April 3, 1951 April 3, 1951 Oct. 1, 1951 April 3, 1951

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SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY:

Dr. Orlando Puente y Pérez (8)

Auténtico

Oct. 10, 1948

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- (1) Member of Cabinet since February 4, 1950
 - (2) Member of Cabinet since October 10, 1948
 - (3) Acting Minister of Justice
 - (4) Minister of Defense from June 21, 1949 to Feb. 4, 1950
 - (5) Minister of Labor from October 10, 1948 to Feb. 4, 1950
 - (6) Prime Minister October 9, 1950 to October 1, 1951
 - (7) Member of Cabinet since September 25, 1950
 - (8) Secretary of the Presidency since October 10, 1948 and Minister without Portfolio May 3 to Oct. 1, 1951

October 2, 1951.

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MEMORANDUM

From: Cultural Attaché Jacob Canter

Subject: Aureliano Sánchez Arango and the Colegio de Maestros Normales y Equiparados

Some years ago there existed in Cuba a single organization of primary school teachers, which was called the "Colegio de Maestros de Cuba". This organization was soon infiltrated by communists, and communists occupied its most important positions. As a result of this, a split occurred in the ranks, and the dissidents formed a new, non-communist organization by the name of "Colegio de Maestros Normales y Equiparados". For several years there was a struggle between these two organizations to obtain the recognition of the Cuban government as the organization which officially represented the teaching profession.

Over a year ago Dr. Aureliano Sánchez Arango, then Minister of Education, set about to solve the problem. He did it in the following way: In October 1950, he called a national congress of teachers for the ostensible purpose of having the teachers decide upon their unification in a single "colegio". The delegates decided upon unification, and in subsequent elections the "Colegio de Maestros Normales y Equiparados" won the largest number of adherents. This "Colegio" was then given official recognition by the Cuban government. It is the only primary school teachers' organization which has such recognition, and membership in it is compulsory.

Dr. Felipe Donate, Director of Education and Culture of the Ministry of Education, and right-hand man of Sánchez Arango in the administration of the schools of the country, has told me that Sánchez Arango was seriously concerned about the problem of communist leadership in the Colegio de Maestros de Cuba and decided upon unification as the best method to get rid of that Colegio. I have heard from many sources, too, from teachers and others in educational circles, that Sánchez Arango personally supported the Colegio de Maestros Normales y Equiparados. Even before unification I frequently saw its leaders at the Ministry and often in company with Donate and Sánchez Arango. In this connection I attach a clipping from El Mundo of October 2, 1951, in which the Colegio de Maestros Normales y Equiparados gives public recognition to the contribution Sánchez Arango made to education in Cuba during his tenure of office.

This organization has, in my experience, always shown an anti-communist attitude. Its declaration of principles issued in October, 1950, contained two outstandingly pro-

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democratic statements; and when the American teachers were here last December, it issued jointly with them a declaration calling for "firm adherence to the principles of democracy".

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Declaraciones De los Maestros Normalistas

Enjuician la Obra de Sánchez Arango en Educación

El Colegio Nacional de Maestros Normales y Equiparados, en declaraciones firmadas por su Comité Ejecutivo, hace constar lo siguiente:

1.—Que el Colegio Nacional ratifica su posición de defensa honrada, sin sometimientos ni mediatizaciones, de los justos intereses de la clase magisterial, por los cuales se mantendrá, con civismo y valentía, en pie de lucha.

2.—Que el Colegio Nacional, que representa la voluntad mayoritaria del Magisterio, se debe a la clase magisterial, a la Nación y al pueblo cubanos.

3.—Que el Colegio Nacional reconoce, públicamente, el balance de los aciertos y la parte de la obra positiva del ministro de Educación saliente, doctor Aureliano Sánchez Arango, entre los cuales, destacamos el cumplimiento riguroso de los escalafones, pago de sobresueldos a maestros y directores, pago simultáneo a todos los compañeros maestros de la República, reconocimiento de los Colegios de Maestros. Por el mantenimiento de todas estas conquistas, que pertenecen a la Escuela y la enseñanza, estaremos vigilantes, para impedir a toda costa que puedan ser arrebatadas o negadas.

4.—Que en el día de ayer, domingo, 30 de septiembre, invitados los miembros de este Ejecutivo Nacional, conjuntamente con la digna representación de los periodistas, comprobamos, que en los almacenes del ministerio de Educación existen, empaquetados por provincias y distritos, las cantidades de material escolar suficientes, para ser distribuido por toda la República. Estos hechos los exponemos a la luz pública, con toda la responsabilidad necesaria, porque por encima de las pasiones y las luchas políticas, nos debemos a la verdad y así la proclamamos.