

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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FROM: Havana (Via Pouch)

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NO: 548, May 16

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Here below is summary significant developments which after period relative calmness brings government intervention Federation Electric Workers back into National focus as major labor problem.

1. May 14, Cofino followers after failure get permission hold rally staged unauthorized "lightening" demonstration in front offices Cuban Electric Company. This broken up by police who made several arrests including Amado Maestri and Guillermo Mestri. They later released. Stated immediate cause of demonstration was dismissal of Manola Castro as chief Workers Welfare Department and his replacement by Luis Cabrera who follower of Samalea.
2. May 15, Cofino followers began combination slowdown-sitdown strike in offices Electric Company not only in Habana but throughout Cuba as protest manner in which police handled situation May 14.
3. Afternoon May 15 Labor Minister issued resolution declaring strike illegal and participants subject to penalty under criminal code. He pointed out (1) vital nature of electric power and (2) that dispute does not involve wages and working conditions. Later in afternoon 10 persons including daughter of Cofino arrested and charged being involved illicit strike. Lawyer for Electric Company preferred charges.
4. Company manager issued circular to department chiefs saying strike unjustified, that it involved no issue between company and employees that it solely an inter-union fight; that company fully intends to abide by and respect collective bargaining agreement; and thus workers should use good judgment and restore normalcy to operations of company.

5. So far no

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