



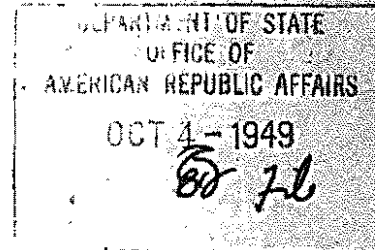
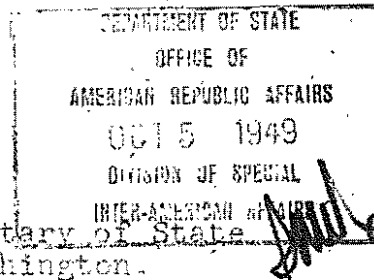
THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 717

American Embassy
Habana, Cuba, September 21, 1949

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Subject: President's message read at opening of Third
Session of the 22nd Congress, September 19, 1949.



The Honorable
The Secretary of State
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that both Houses of the 22nd Cuban Congress commenced their third session on September 19, 1949. The Senate met under the leadership of its President, Senator Miguel A. SUAREZ Fernández, with a quorum of 33 Senators, including Senator José M. ALEMAN who took his seat for the first time. In a speech welcoming Senator Aleman, Senator Santiago REY, Republican Party leader, said that he hoped the work of Sr. Aleman in the Senate would be "as productive for the national interest as his previous activities in the administration".

Dr. Lincoln RODON, President of the House of Representatives, presided over the opening session of the lower house which was attended by 87 Representatives. At this meeting Congressmen Ramon GRAU Alsina and Antonio FERNANDEZ Macho took their seats for the first time.

The first item on the agenda in both Houses was the reading of the President's message. In the House the message was read almost completely, while in the Senate the message received the customary "symbolic" reading. In addition, the Senate received 12 messages from the Executive, including requests for Senate approval of the Inter-American Wheat Agreement and the appointments of Señor Segundo CURTI as Minister of Defense and Dr. Carlos RAMIREZ Corría as Minister of Health and Social Welfare. The Executive also requested Senate approval of the appointments of the Judges to the Court of Constitutional and Social Guarantees (Embassy's despatch No. 567, July 25, 1949), as well as of various diplomatic appointments.

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As is customary, both Houses agreed to continue consideration of bills pending from the last session, including important bills providing a new control system for government accounting (Tribunal de Cuentas and Contabilidad del Estado).

In the House, the only interruption in the reading of the President's message came from a Congressman who expressed surprise that the section of the message relative to public order contained no reference to recent acts of terrorism in Cuba.

At the end of the reading of the message, the Chamber recessed for the purpose of receiving the Italian goodwill mission now in Cuba.

President's Message

The President's message consisted of a series of reports on the activities of the various ministries and touched on the following points (as described briefly in the press):

Ministry of State

The message described the breaking of relations with Peru and defended the Government's recognition of the Venezuelan Government, stating that the latter step was considered necessary in view of the provisions of Resolution XXXV of the Bogota Conference. It added that Cuba has normal relations with all the other countries except Nicaragua. It also described the meeting of the American Committee on Dependent Territories (Embassy's despatch No. 701, September 16, 1949 and previous). The message told of the Government's defense of Cuban interests at the Annecy GATT Conference and the reasons for the withdrawal of the Cuban delegation from that meeting. The message also emphasized the importance of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) in the economic development of Latin American countries, stating that Cuba was in favor of the preparation by the Commission of a basic annual report on the Latin American economy.

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Ministry of Justice

This section of the report described the various buildings completed, planned or under construction for use as courts or prisons, and other matters of a technical nature.

Ministry of Gobernación

Among the other items mentioned in this section of the report, it was stated that during the first six months of 1949, 10,833 permits to carry arms were issued, of which 2,503 permits were issued on a gratis basis.

Ministry of Finance

This section of the message described the measures adopted with a view to financial re-organization of the Government on the basis of the new budget and gave information relative to the Cuban tax structure. The message also went into some detail in connection with the question of veterans' pensions. Data contained in the message relative to Government revenues and expenditures will be the subject of a later report based on the message itself since the press reports thereon are incomplete. It was indicated, however, that Government revenues have declined.

Ministry of Public Works

This section of the report contained a description of the public works completed, under construction or planned (but not those planned in connection with a proposed \$100,000,000 loan).

Ministry of Agriculture

The report on the Ministry of Agriculture contained a lengthy account of the work of that Ministry and its suggestions for the enactment of legislation dealing with the control of plant diseases, handling of meat for human consumption, etc. It described various aspects of the sugar and tobacco industries and stated that lower prices for various crops were contributing to a lower cost of living in Cuba. The report also described the foreign market for Cuban tobacco and stated that Cuba was negotiating with Canada, Mexico, Uruguay and other countries with a view to expanding those markets.

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Ministry of Education

The report on education consisted of a technical discussion of the reorganization of the school system, the classification of teachers, preparations for a census of rural students and such items as school lunches, school equipment, etc.

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

This section outlined the Ministry's work in connection with prophylaxis and vaccination, the struggle against intestinal parasites in rural areas and other sanitary problems.

Other Ministries

Press reports do not give an account of the reports on the other ministries, merely stating that they contained detailed information of the administration of those departments.

For the Department's convenience there are enclosed herewith press clippings outlining the main points in the President's message. The message itself is said to be voluminous and is not yet available.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Earl T. Crain
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures

1. Clipping from Avance of September 19, 1949.
2. Clipping from Excelsior of September 20, 1949.
3. Clipping from Información of September 20, 1949.
4. Clipping from Diario de la Marina of September 20, 1949.
5. Clipping from El Mundo of September 20, 1949.

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