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THE MISSION OF THE LAND-GRANT COLLEGES IN PROMOTING OUR GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICIES AMONG THE LATIN AMERICAN REPUBLICS¹

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WHEN the Morrill Act was passed by our United States Congress and approved by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, it brought into the world the first truly democratic program of higher education. It announced to the world that the people of this country believed that the son of the farmer, the son of the mechanic and the son of the shopkeeper were just as much entitled to an education in an institution of higher learning as the son of the independent rich. It also

brought into the world for the first time the idea that the state and federal governments should help finance any form of higher education.

The masses of the people of the United States have never fully understood the mission or the work of the land-grant colleges, and, not understanding them, our people have never fully appreciated their accomplishments.

In this terrible and tragic world situation, when the forces of evil are striving with all their might to destroy completely the democratic peoples of the world

¹ An address delivered before the general session, Association of Land-Grant Colleges, Chicago, October 28, 1942.

and the democratic institutions they have developed, these land-grant colleges are meeting the acid test. From their laboratories, classrooms and drill fields have come many of the engineers who are solving our technical problems and many of the agricultural leaders who are directing the production of the food and raiment of our armed forces and the armed forces and civilian populations of our allies.

Let it be fully understood that at the same time they are rendering this vital constructive service they are placing upon the firing lines in every section of the world where fighting is in progress tens of thousands of our best trained and most efficient officers.

Yes, the land-grant college has met the supreme test in a big, definite and constructive way. The fine accomplishments of these colleges have vindicated a thousand fold the keen and far-seeing vision of those great men who saw clearly during troubled times in their own day the fundamental needs of a democratic world nearly one hundred years in the future.

I am convinced that the time has come when the land-grant college system, in addition to continuing its work in a still bigger way at home, must offer to a stricken and prostrate world its democratic plan of higher education.

This is especially true of our friends and neighbors among the Latin American countries. We are now presented with this opportunity. If we pass it by, the opportunity may not come again; if not, we will have missed forever the chance to look into the future with the clear vision and big souls of Justine Morrill, Abraham Lincoln and their associates.

When we bring this war to a victorious close, which we most assuredly are going to do, we are going to find ourselves confronted with the most vital and at the same time the most difficult and complicated problems ever to confront a people during peace times.

When this war closes, it is going to leave many of what were once the most powerful nations in the world completely paralyzed politically, socially and economically. World commerce will be completely disrupted and broken. All fundamental organizations for the development and promotion of the agencies for the civilization of mankind will have been greatly weakened or perhaps totally destroyed. There will arise, therefore, from this world catastrophe an appealing and urgent opportunity for some nation to hold aloft the light of civilization, to point and to lead the way back to a sane, sound and just plan of life for all nations, even those whose treachery and barbarity have brought civilization to its lowest ebb in many centuries.

The foundation for a new world order must be laid broad and deep. This new world order must take

every precaution against the recurrence of another disastrous world conflict. If this is to be accomplished, there must be a united, prosperous and contented confederation of the American Republics.

This, in my judgment, can best be accomplished by the United States Government making every possible effort to encourage and promote the establishment of a system of land-grant colleges throughout the Latin American Republics.

I had, through the courtesy of Nelson Rockefeller, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, an opportunity to visit most of the Latin American countries during the late summer and fall of 1941. One of the main purposes of this tour was to visit and inspect their educational institutions.

On this tour I visited the following educational institutions in the order listed:

(1) *Escuela Nacional de Agricultura*. This is the national agricultural college of Mexico, located at Chapingo, some thirty miles from Mexico City. There are about 500 students attending this institution. They come from practically every state in Mexico, and most of them are on scholarships. They have fairly good buildings and a good faculty. Some of their courses require seven years for completion and they give a degree of "Engineering in Agriculture." Military training has recently been introduced at this institution.

(2) Accompanied by the Minister of Agriculture, who is a graduate of the University of California, I visited the agricultural college at San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica. This institution is limited in buildings and those they have are not in good condition and are poorly equipped. It has few students and a small faculty. It needs finances very badly. The people are earnest, hard-working and deserving of help.

(3) During my three weeks in Venezuela I visited the *Instituto Experimental de Agricultura* at Caracas, the capital. There are few students in this institution and most of the work is along research lines. They seem to be doing good work. At Caripito in eastern Venezuela, I inspected the *Escuela Rural Andres Bello*, a grade school which is operated through the generosity of the Standard Oil Company. This school teaches the children domestic science, agriculture and manual training. There is deep interest and great enthusiasm for the work. At Maracay, in the interior about a hundred miles from Caracas, I inspected the two-year practical agricultural school, where there are two instructors and about sixty boys. They have fairly good buildings with good equipment. They are doing an interesting piece of work.

(4) I then went to Trinidad, where I visited the *Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture*. This is a

British-owned institution where they do considerable research but have only a few students, most of them doing graduate work. These students are trained primarily in tropical agriculture and are used in the tropical countries under the control of the British Dominion.

(5) Upon arrival in Brazil, I flew a thousand miles up the Amazon River to Manaus, where I visited the two-year practical agricultural school supported by the State of Amazonas. This school has two teachers and about two hundred boys enrolled. Though they have poor buildings and poor equipment, their boundless enthusiasm enables them to do a good piece of work. This is a very deserving institution.

I then flew back to Belem, at the mouth of the Amazon, and inspected the new research institution that is being built near the city by the Government of Brazil. This institution will deal primarily with research problems relating to rubber, but at the same time will make a study of other tropical problems common to that great section.

They are putting up splendid buildings, have a large tract of land, have selected a strong group of specialists and it is my prediction that good work will be done.

They have recently relocated and rebuilt their agricultural college at Recife. They have good buildings, splendid equipment, a strong faculty and a large number of students. I think they have the best collection of insects to be found anywhere in the world.

My next stop was at Bahia. In company with the Secretary of Agriculture, I went inland about one hundred miles and visited the new agricultural college being built at Cruz Des Almos. The governor of this state is a former student of the A. and M. College of Texas. He is enthusiastic about the development of agriculture and plans to spend about \$700,000 on this institution. Three buildings were nearing completion—the main building, the Chemistry Building and the Agricultural Building. A large tract of land is connected with the institution.

At a site some thirty miles from Rio de Janeiro, the Government of Brazil is building a National Agricultural University. They have a large tract of land, and a fine group of buildings is under construction. They expect to spend approximately \$5,000,000 on this institution. It will probably be at least two years before it is completed. This is the finest physical agricultural plant I have ever seen. It gives promise of being the outstanding educational institution in all Central and South America.

At Sao Paulo I went inland to visit the Escola Superior de Agricultura, located at Piracicaba. This is said to be the oldest and best agricultural college

in Brazil. They have good buildings that are well equipped and a splendid faculty that is doing fine work.

Upon my return to Sao Paulo, I visited the Animal Husbandry and Agricultural College and Experiment Station. They have good buildings well equipped and a fine group of specialists.

I visited Port Alegre in southern Brazil. They do not have an agricultural school but are now making a strenuous effort to secure a college modeled after our land-grant colleges.

(6) Though I did not visit the agricultural college in Argentina, located at Buenos Aires, I had a very interesting conference with a member of the faculty and with the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

(7) While at Santiago, the capital of Chile, I visited and inspected the veterinary college and the agricultural college. They have inferior buildings, poor equipment and small faculties. They have few students. These institutions need and deserve much greater financial assistance than they are getting at the present time.

(8) While I was in Lima, Peru, the Minister of Agriculture took me to the agricultural college located about thirty miles from the city. A severe earthquake almost destroyed this institution about two years ago. They have few and poorly constructed buildings, a small faculty and few students. They have a small tract of land. This is another institution that needs financial assistance.

While on my tour I visited, in addition to the colleges, a large number of experiment stations, demonstration farms, ranches, dairies and other agricultural enterprises and talked with people in every walk of life.

A detailed account of my study of the educational institutions of the Latin American countries is given in my Number II report to Nelson Rockefeller.

As a result of this tour, during which time I also made a careful study of the agricultural economy of those countries, I became firmly convinced that the best possible assistance this nation can render those countries is to aid them in developing educational institutions modeled after our own land-grant colleges. The reasons for this are very clear.

The last great frontier of the Western Hemisphere now lies south of the Rio Grande. We in the United States have already consumed most of our natural resources. Europe has almost completely exhausted hers, primarily in waging wars.

The Latin American countries are tremendously rich in natural resources consisting of both minerals and agricultural products. What they need, and need urgently and desperately, is a group of trained lead-

ers or specialists to develop their resources. They especially need men trained in agriculture, engineering, particularly sanitary engineering, and veterinary medicine.

Those countries do not need assistance in art and music and such subjects. They are as well or better developed than we are along those lines. What they need is democracy in their institutions of higher learning that can come best, as it has to us, through a system of land-grant colleges modeled after ours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I am thoroughly convinced that the United States has its best opportunity to promote complete and lasting understanding and friendship with our neighbors to the south by cooperating with them on a strictly practical basis in the development of their courses of study in agriculture, engineering and in veterinary medicine, and in aiding them to better equip their physical plants and to strengthen their faculties.

This can be accomplished best by the following actions:

(1) We should propose to the respective governments that we appoint a commission to make a careful study of their educational systems and experiment stations. This commission should have on it a representative of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Department of State, the Office of Education, the Department of Agriculture and three representatives of the land-grant colleges—one to represent agriculture, one engineering and one veterinary medicine. This commission should visit all the countries to be included in the survey in order to be able to make comparisons and thus insure a report and recommendations that will be fair and just to every country concerned. This report, with recommendations, should be submitted to each of the Latin American Republics.

(2) Steps should be taken immediately to increase the supply of visiting teachers from this country to all institutions desiring them. These teachers should be carefully selected from the agricultural, engineering and veterinary faculties of our country, both as to their ability to fit into the social and economic life of the Latin American countries and to meet the educational requirements. A considerable number of scholarships, at least five hundred, should be set up by this government so they could be awarded, without too much red tape, to their most intelligent young men to enter our educational institutions for the purpose of securing advanced training in agriculture, engineering, veterinary medicine and home economics.

It is highly important for these young men to secure

this training as soon as possible in order that they may return and strengthen the faculties of the institutions in those countries or become specialists in the industrial and agricultural development of their countries.

Practically all the countries visited, except Argentina, are lacking in improved breeds of livestock—both beef and dairy cattle, horses, hogs and poultry. I am convinced that the exportation of outstanding representatives of these breeds to educational institutions and experiment stations of those countries would rank next to the awarding of scholarships in the rendering of a great service to the people of those countries and the promotion of friendly relations. These breeds should be carefully selected. They should be sent only to the countries where experience has shown the climate and soil to be congenial. Most of these countries have native breeds that can be used as a foundation on which to build. A good example of this can be found in the native Criollo cattle of Venezuela and central and northern Brazil. This is a strong, vigorous, big-boned breed that is well adapted to those countries.

In conclusion, let me say that I found the people of practically every country visited to be extremely kind and gracious. They are anxious for an opportunity to cooperate with us to the fullest extent in educational matters.

I am convinced that most of the countries of Central and South America are on the eve of a great industrial and agricultural awakening, similar to that period in our history some fifty to sixty years ago. The opportunity has presented itself. It remains to be seen whether we will avail ourselves of this opportunity to render a great public service and at the same time strengthen our bonds of friendship with our neighbors to the south.

There are two great problems facing the world today; the first and most urgent and pressing is to win the war, the second is to win the peace at the close of the war. There is no doubt in my mind but what we will win the war. There is, however, much doubt in my mind about winning the peace. We won World War I, but we lost the peace and lost it miserably.

There is little doubt but what the United States is going to be faced with the responsibility of winning the peace at the close of this war. We are going to need the full cooperation and support of the Latin American countries in carrying through our program to a successful conclusion. In my judgment, the best way to secure this is through educational channels, especially through the education of their young men in this country.