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PAN AMERICANISM

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## 6. First Pan American Financial Conference, 1915.<sup>1</sup>

### *a. ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.*

*Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the American Republics, Ladies, and Gentlemen:*

The part that falls to me this morning is a very simple one, but a very delightful one. It is to bid you a very hearty welcome indeed to this conference. The welcome is the more hearty because we are convinced that a conference like this will result in the things that we most desire. I am sure that those who have this conference in charge have already made plain to you its purpose and its spirit. Its purpose is to draw the American Republics together by bonds of common interest and of mutual understanding; and we comprehend, I hope, just what the meaning of that is. There can be no sort of union of interest if there is a purpose of exploitation by any one of the parties to a great conference of this sort. The basis of successful commercial intercourse is common interest, not selfish interest. It is an actual interchange of services and of values; it is based upon reciprocal relations and not selfish relations. It is based upon those things upon which all successful economic intercourse must be based, because selfishness breeds suspicion; suspicion, hostility; and hostility, failure. We are not, therefore, trying to make use of each other, but we are trying to be of use to one another.

It is very surprising to me, it is even a source of mortification, that a conference like this should have been so long delayed, that it should never have occurred before, that it should have required a crisis of the world to show the Americas how truly they were neighbors to one another. If there is any one happy circumstance, gentlemen, arising out of the present distressing condition of the world, it is that it has revealed us to one another; it has shown us what it means to be neighbors. And I cannot help harboring the hope, the very high

<sup>1</sup> "Proceedings of the First Pan American Financial Conference," Washington, 1915. Opening session, May 24, 1915, pages 87-91.

hope, that by this commerce of minds with one another, as well as commerce in goods, we may show the world in part the path to peace. It would be a very great thing if the Americas could add to the distinction which they already wear this of showing the way to peace, to permanent peace.

The way to peace for us, at any rate, is manifest. It is the kind of rivalry which does not involve aggression. It is the knowledge that men can be of the greatest service to one another, and nations of the greatest service to one another, when the jealousy between them is merely a jealousy of excellence, and when the basis of their intercourse is friendship. There is only one way in which we wish to take advantage of you and that is by making better goods, by doing the things that we seek to do for each other better, if we can, than you do them, and so spurring you on, if we might, by so handsome a jealousy as that to excel us. I am so keenly aware that the basis of personal friendship is this competition in excellence, that I am perfectly certain that this is the only basis for the friendship of nations,—this handsome rivalry in which there is no dislike, this rivalry in which there is nothing but the hope of a common elevation in great enterprises which we can undertake in common.

There is one thing that stands in our way among others—for you are more conversant with the circumstances than I am; the thing I have chiefly in mind is the physical lack of means of communication, the lack of vehicles,—the lack of ships, the lack of established routes of trade,—the lack of those things which are absolutely necessary if we are to have true commercial and intimate commercial relations with one another; and I am perfectly clear in my judgment that if private capital cannot soon enter upon the adventure of establishing these physical means of communication, the government must undertake to do so. We cannot indefinitely stand apart and need each other for the lack of what can easily be supplied, and if one instrumentality cannot supply it, then another must be found which will supply it. We cannot know each other unless we see each other; we cannot deal with each other unless we communicate with each other. So as soon as we communicate and are upon a familiar footing of intercourse, we shall understand one another, and the



bonds between the Americas will be such bonds that no influence that the world may produce in the future will ever break them.

If I am selfish for America, I at least hope that my selfishness is enlightened. The selfishness that hurts the other party is not enlightened selfishness. If I were acting upon a mere ground of selfishness, I would seek to benefit the other party and so tie him to myself; so that even if you were to suspect me of selfishness, I hope you will also suspect me of intelligence and of knowing the only safe way for the establishment of the things which we covet, as well as the establishment of things which we desire and which we would feel honored if we could earn and win.

I have said these things because they will perhaps enable you to understand how far from formal my welcome to this body is. It is a welcome from the heart, it is a welcome from the head; it is a welcome inspired by what I hope are the highest ambitions of those who live in these two great continents, who seek to set an example to the world in freedom of institutions, freedom of trade and intelligence of mutual service.

b. ADDRESS OF HON. WILLIAM J. BRYAN, SECRETARY OF STATE.

*Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, Representatives of Pan America, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

If you will consult the program you will find that I am to deliver an address of welcome, but it is superfluous for me to welcome you after the eloquent and appropriate words to which you have just listened. On ordinary occasions the Secretary of State, as the President's representative in dealing with foreign nations, welcomes visitors, but this is not an ordinary occasion—it is an epoch-making event, and it was fitting, therefore, that the welcome should be spoken by the President himself and not by a representative. If the welcome extended to you was to be as whole-souled as that expressed in the Spanish phrase which, translated into English, means "my house is your house," it must come from the occupant of the White House. My only duty, as I see it, after the felicitous words have been addressed to you by the President, is to give cordial approval

to the noble idea, conceived by the Honorable Secretary of the Treasury, which has resulted in this notable gathering. I do give emphatic indorsement to this idea and expect this conference to have lasting and far-reaching results. I shall content myself with presenting the one thought that has been uppermost in my mind since this idea was presented to our Nation and to the nations assembled here. It is the idea that we are neighbors.

God in His providence has made these Republics the joint tenants of that wonderful heritage which extends from the St. Lawrence and Puget Sound on the north to Cape Horn on the south. We have taken upon ourselves the responsibility of developing this territory for ourselves and for the world. It is dedicated to a system of government—to the republican form of government. May I not describe these Republics as resembling a great banyan tree? The United States is the parent stem; the branches, extending to the south, have taken root in the soil and are now permanent supports—yes, important parts—of that great tree. Linked together by a unity of political purposes and by a common political ideal these Republics cannot but be interested in each other. We are geographically so situated that we must live side by side, and certain expectations are aroused by the very fact that we are neighbors.

The first is that we shall *know* each other. Neighbors should become acquainted, and this great meeting must result in an extension of acquaintance which is not only desirable, but necessary. I am sure that the Secretary of the Treasury has in mind this more intimate association; as we know each other better we shall be more and more assured of the good will of each toward the other.

The second expectation aroused by the fact that we are neighbors is that we shall be *friends*. This feeling of friendship is growing and will continue to grow. Time tends to increase it and words spoken by the representatives of the several nations have promoted its growth. The memorable address delivered by our Chief Executive at Mobile a year ago, when he restated what has been so often stated before, that this Nation has no desire to take one foot of land from any other nation by conquest—I am sure that this utterance has contributed something toward the cementing of our friendship. And

may I refer to one other thing which has had an influence? It is the fact that this nation is now united to the Spanish-speaking Republics by treaties that provide for investigation of all disputes, leaving no cause for which we can go to war until after there has been a year's time for deliberation and for passion to subside. This country has shown its good will by offering to all of the American Republics, without respect to size, such a treaty, and these Republics have responded in the spirit in which the offer was made. We may feel certain therefore that in the years to come there will be no hasty rushing into armed conflict; indeed, we have such faith in the power of reason, when controlled by friendship, that we are confident that a year's inquiry will enable us to find peaceful means of settling any disputes that may rise.

The third expectation, suggested by the fact that we live side by side, is that of mutual *helpfulness*. Neighbors must not only know each other and be friends, but neighbors must help each other as opportunity offers. With acquaintance increasing and friendship established, I take it that the principal purpose of this meeting is to find ways in which we may be helpful to each other.

The President has suggested one, and a very important one, namely, co-operation in the providing of means of communication. He has used his great influence to secure authority for this Nation to do its part, and I doubt not that his efforts will find a response in the nations here assembled and that in the course of time these nations, by co-operation, will establish lines of communication which will not only be of advantage in ordinary times but will protect our commerce from interruption if at any future time the nations in other parts of the world find themselves unable to settle their disputes by the peaceful methods which we expect to employ.

There are other matters in which co-operation is possible, as for instance in finance and communication by wire and by mail, of which the Secretary of the Treasury will speak more at length.

But I would not be pardoned if, with so many of our distinguished guests prepared to speak, and so inspiring an audience anxious to listen, I were to trespass further upon your time. Let me therefore, in conclusion, emphasize the thought that brought me before you,