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STUDY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SERVICES IN THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS

MEETING AT SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, DECEMBER 1954

Public Administration Clearing House has been asked by the Inter-American Economic and Social Council to make a study of technical services in the field of public administration in Latin America. The question is whether there is available in the region - either from within the countries of the region or from suitable outside sources - an adequate supply of trained technicians, expert advisers, training facilities, technical literature, and other professional resources in the administrative field. If there are deficiencies in the supply of such services, recommendations are to be submitted as to how the deficiencies might be remedied.

As a part of its study, the Clearing House is seeking information in the special field of municipal government concerning the need for such technical services and the institutions and channels through which an increased supply of such services might flow. It is for this purpose that the Clearing House wishes to consult a group of the well-informed persons assembled at the V Inter-American Congress of Municipalities.

It is hoped that two aspects of this problem can be discussed: (1) needs for technical services to municipalities and (2) needs of national governments for technical aid and services concerning their administrative relations with municipalities and other local government units. As background for this discussion we are glad to have the benefit of a paper by Dr. Carlos M. Moran, Secretary-General of the Inter-American Municipal Organization.

The following points are suggested for discussion:

1. Do municipalities in Latin America now have available an adequate supply of technical services in the administrative field?
2. If not, in which areas of municipal activity are additional technical services most urgently needed?
3. From what sources do municipalities now receive such services?
4. What obstacles now impede the flow of services for these sources?
5. If the supply of technical administrative services to municipalities is to be substantially increased, what would be the most desirable sources?

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6. Leaving aside the question of how authority, functions, and public revenues should be divided between municipalities, states, and central governments, is it not true that there is an increasing number of governmental activities in which all levels of government have some concern? Are not the relations between the levels of government - whether they are characterized by cooperation, delegation, or supervision - becoming increasingly complex, thus greatly burdening both the central governments and the municipalities?

7. Are the administrative problems arising out of the relations between the central governments and other levels of government of such a character, and of sufficient similarity in the various countries of Latin America, that they lend themselves to impartial technical analysis and discussion?

8. Would it be desirable to have an increased exchange of information, and possibly other forms of technical cooperation, between Latin American countries concerning improved methods of organizing the relations between central governments and states, provinces, departments, and municipalities?

9. Would both municipal governments and national governments be interested in such a program? How might such a program be organized and financed?

10. What are some of the specific administrative problems between the various levels of government on which technical interchange might be profitable?