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BUILDING A BETTER HEMISPHERE SERIES NO. 7

*When Good Neighbors  
Get Together*

By

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REPRINTED FROM  
NATION'S BUSINESS  
MAGAZINE

**POINT 4** IN ACTION

**THE INSTITUTE OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS**

INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL OFFICE

TECHNICAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION

# When Good Neighbors Get Together

By O. K. Armstrong

**THE Institute of Inter-American Affairs has shown in Peru that Point IV can be made to work. However, it takes more than Yankee dollars and know-how to get the job done.**

**LESS THAN** an hour's drive from the outskirts of Lima, capital of Peru, I saw land being plowed up that had produced a bumper corn crop—slightly more than 100 bushels to the acre. The operators of the rattling, clanking tractor were Peruvian farmers, but the machines, plows and equipment were made in the United States.

The next day, in a medical clinic in Lima, I saw physicians and sanitary technicians, of both Peruvian and American citizenship, working side by side in direct service to patients, in laboratory studies and in conferences on public health problems.

All about the Peruvian landscape I saw neat, modern schools, built under joint auspices of U. S. and local educators.

Here were examples of each of the three major activities of The Institute of Inter-American Affairs, an organization that might well be called "the testing ground for Point IV." President Truman stated the case for Point IV in his inaugural address: "We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas."

Plenty of American business men, while agreeing that this is a noble aim, are concerned about how the program can be carried out on sound business principles. They recognize chances for numerous pitfalls, such as the danger of foreign governments preferring gifts from Uncle Sam's treasury rather than normal commercial investments. But the Institute of Inter-American Affairs is living proof that underdeveloped areas can be aided by American capital and know-how, provided the program is a matter of *mutual* planning, cost and operation.

The Institute is not an impractical, visionary "do good" outfit, spending money recklessly on schemes of doubtful economic and social value. It is a down-to-earth, tested program of international cooperation. It is paying tangible dividends for both the United States and our Latin American neighbors.

The work of the Institute began ten years ago as part of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, headed by Nelson Rockefeller. Hard on the heels of Pearl Harbor, in January, 1942, the Hemisphere Solidarity Conference met in Rio de Janeiro with the announced purpose to unite all the Americas against the Axis powers in the global war. One item in the resolution passed by this conference, little noted at the time, called on all nations of the western hemisphere to cooperate in improvement of health and sanitary conditions. Rockefeller began that activity in various countries of South America, and found ready cooperation.

Since health depends in large measure on food, a division of food supply was added to the office of Inter-American Affairs. Subsequently an education program was launched as a separate undertaking by the Rockefeller office. When the office was closed in 1946, these activities were transferred to the State Department. Next year they were combined in the In-

stitute, with a board of directors appointed by the Secretary of State. Purposes of the Institute are "to further the general welfare of, and to strengthen friendship and understanding among, the peoples of the American republics through collaboration with our governments and agencies in planning, financing and administering technical programs and projects, especially in the fields of agriculture, public health and sanitation, and education."

Study any Institute project first hand, and you'll see that word "collaboration" in action. "Naturally enough!" explains Dr. Washington Patino, assistant to the director of the division of agriculture at Lima. "This is a program of mutual benefit for both Peru and the United States. Greatest benefit for our people is steadily rising standards of living. For your people — steadily increasing markets for your manufactured products."

Each program must be embodied in an international agreement between the United States Government and that of the cooperating republic. These basic agreements have been drawn up only at the request of the neighbor government.

Financial arrangements are on the same level. The contributions of each government go into a joint bank account in which it is impossible to distinguish the pesos of the one from the dollars of the other. Under 1947 legislation American appropriations were limited to \$5,000,000 annually. Recent legislation extended the life of the Institute until June 1955, and authorized an appropriation of \$35,000,000 for the five-year period. Currently, we are investing about two thirds of the cost and Latin American neighbors about one third.

Every South American country now participates in the programs except Argentina, and all in Central America and the Caribbean except Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua.

A simple, easily directed type of organization is maintained by the Institute. In each cooperating country,

**SCIPA rural agent at Pucallpa says good-bye to a Chama Indian on the Ucayali River, Peru.**



the appropriate ministry sets up a special *servicio* or bureau within its department. The director of this bureau is generally a citizen of the United States, and serves as chief of the "field party" working in all the projects of that division. U. S. experts are assigned to him by the Institute. The local government supplies all other technicians, field men and workers.

The agricultural program is known as the *Servicio Cooperativo Inter-Americano de Produccion de Alimentos*—conveniently abbreviated to SCIPA. It has made big strides in the development of a more adequate food supply, the introduction of better crops, improved livestock, soil and water conservation, farm-extension work, better tools and methods of cultivation and compiling of basic agricultural statistics.

Peru, I found, is an example of progress in all three activities—agriculture, health and education. Also—and of great importance—the Peruvian Government combed the country for the best-trained, most-experienced personnel to carry on the projects.

Dr. Patino, for example, is a veteran of the foreign service in Washington, and was a representative of Peru in the Assembly of the United Nations. He knows inter-American affairs and wants to see his people enjoy better health, eat better food, produce more exports and become steadily more enlightened.

Chief of the SCIPA is John R. Neale, who learned dirt farming as a youth in Ohio, graduated from Kansas State College and had a successful career in farm-extension work in Wyoming. Under his direction are 450 employees, of whom 14 are from the United States, one from a neighboring South American country and the rest Peruvian nationals. Forty-six graduates of the Peruvian College of Agriculture are on this staff.

Within a year after beginning its work, SCIPA established 14 branch offices. Now there are 34, reaching 1,000,000 farm families. More than 40,000 persons consulted these offices on farm problems and projects last year. At least 157 farmer committees are functioning in cooperation with these agricultural offices.

Closely allied with the extension work are SCIPA's 18 machinery pools which make modern machinery available to small farmers on a contractual operating basis. Everywhere you can spot tractors and other heavy machines, plowing, cultivating and harvesting the fields for farm families that otherwise could not afford to operate the mechanized equipment needed in mass food production.

Neale's reports show that \$2,500,000 has been spent by his department in the United States for machinery and supplies which could not be purchased in Peru. This item alone is double the amount allotted the SCIPA program in

Peru by the U. S. Government.

A victory garden program, launched during the war, has grown to include 35,000 families, assisted by Institute experts to increase their food production and attain a balanced diet. A program of seed improvement has brought in many tons of choice seed grains from North American farms. That cornfield that produced 100 bushels per acre was planted with a hybrid variety from mid-western growers.

Neale's division is spending roughly \$268,000 to develop the livestock demonstration farms. Not only are these farms showing the latest successful livestock methods; they are proving to doubting Peruvian farm investors that good livestock pays dividends in their country.

One of these farms is near Cajamarca, in the highlands—elevation from 10,000 to 14,500 feet—with 70,000 acres. Here 297 families are being taught how to raise sheep and beef cattle. American and Peruvian soil experts advise on the growing of feed, the use of fertilizers, the marketing of the livestock.

The other demonstration farm is deep in the eastern jungle lands adjoining Brazil. Here virgin jungle is being cleared for cattle production. Proper breeds for resisting heat and tropical diseases are being introduced, particularly Brahman cattle from Florida and Texas.

It's never all smooth sailing for Institute project workers. To get the livestock projects going, they brought in 250 choice bulls from North America and European countries. It was easy enough to ward off petty thieves who felt that the most glorious life a bull can lead is to fight a matador in the ring. But it was impossible at first to prevent some of the keepers from overfeeding the animals out of sheer admiration, and several bulls died from too much hospitality. Surviving bulls, and others brought in later, have done quite well.

Up in the Sierras of Peru live some 4,000,000 Indians, almost untouched by the march of progress since the Spanish conquerors first came in. Here SCIPA has begun a vast program to develop enough wheat to make Peru independent of imports. An average of only 20 per cent of their land has ever been worked by these people. With their primitive tools, it takes 35 men to dig up two acres a day. One tractor pulling modern breaking plows can turn six times that much soil a day.

"Let's see what this wheat project can mean to these people," said Neale. "Last year, Peru spent \$40,000,000 to subsidize wheat imports. Yet the land is here to produce that wheat, and it will be produced when we mechanize the farms. Much of the additional income from Peruvian wheat will be spent in the United States for our manufactured commodities."

Potatoes make up one of the great

staple crops of Peru. In the Sierras of Peru more than 800,000 tons of potatoes are grown annually. But an insect pest has been steadily invading the potato fields, alarmingly cutting down the yield. SCIPA insecticide specialists began a counterattack. On one farm used as a demonstration, the potato yield jumped 900 per cent over the bug-infested crops of the year before. The program of insecticide treatment is being extended throughout Peru, and should result in multiplying fourfold the volume of potatoes produced.

Poultry raising is being boosted by importation of an average of 60,000 baby chicks per year from hatcheries in various eastern areas of the United States. From 3,000 to 6,000 dairy cows, from Holland, Argentina and the U. S., are being imported annually with SCIPA assistance. Improved land use, through repair and construction of irrigation systems, soil rehabilitation by proper fertilizers, developing a warehouse system to eliminate spoilage and avoid seasonal fluctuations in supply, organizing a fish and wildlife division, are examples of SCIPA's other varied activities for better eating and better living in Peru.

In the Division of Public Health and Sanitation, Institute experts and their Peruvian associates literally have transformed whole areas. One of the first problems tackled in 1942 was the deadly malaria in the coastal town of Chimbote. Incidence of this disease averaged 25 per cent the year around. Despite Chimbote's favorable location as an industrial city, its population was stationary at about 5,000.

Today, a new drainage and sanitation plan, embracing 887,000 square meters, gives mosquitoes small chance to survive. Ordinances make health measures compulsory. Malaria has been reduced to two per cent and population has risen to 12,000. The town is developing enough electric current to supply a substantial trade area, and there's promise of continued expansion in manufacturing and shipping.

Director of the Institute's Cooperative Health Service is Dr. Frederick J. Wampler, experienced in public health work in Washington, China and his home state of Virginia. He has on his staff from the United States two sanitary engineers, one medical officer, one industrial hygiene expert, two public health nurses and two office workers. The other 556 members of the service are Peruvians.

Launches, jeeps and airplanes take physicians and nurses on regular runs into remote areas. Five hospitals and two ten-bed dispensaries have been built in jungle towns. Nineteen sanitary posts are tucked away in areas so remote that few travelers care to visit them. Seven doctors each operate a medical post in still other regions.

Many of these medical men have studied public health and sanitation in

the United States on grants from The Institute of Inter-American Affairs. One of them, Dr. Jorge Atkins, whose father came to Peru as a young man and married there, is in charge of the health program in Loreto. He has under his direction three hospitals, four dispensaries, a general health center and 15 jungle sanitary posts. He and his staff operate two medical launches. Airplane service brings Lima within three hours of an area which a generation ago was almost isolated from the coast by the Andes Mountains. They operate the 120 bed Santa Rosa Hospital in Iquitos, opened by the service in 1945.

Nurses penetrate to the remotest parts of Peru. Sometimes their offices are in trucks or on floating rafts. They give inoculations, assist the physician in the treatment of infections, issue medical supplies. They assist in teaching expectant mothers and hold classes in child care.

As an example of a program for improvement of rural health, look in on Tingo Maria, a community of 5,000 on the eastern watershed. Here the tropical temperature and heavy rainfall are ideal for the cultivation of manioc, cocoa, tea, rice, yucca, pineapple, citrus fruits and rubber. In 1942, the total health facilities consisted of a small outpatient clinic, with one physician working part time.

In 1943 a service survey showed 99 per cent of all children infected with hookworm or other parasites. A campaign was waged for the construction of toilets, clean drinking water and wholesome foods, an appreciation of the need for shoes, and periodical examination of children. As a result a 40 bed hospital was built. A mobile dispensary servicing workmen on the Tingo Maria-Pucalpa highway attended 11,692 patients during the 18 months it was in operation.

"Recent examinations show that

the percentage of school children infected with intestinal parasites has been cut about in half, while other infections have dropped from 67 to five percent and malaria has been cut to less than one percent," Dr. Wampler told me. And the director added, with understandable pride:

"It's hard to measure in dollars the results of this sort of good-neighborly cooperation."

Industrial hygiene is an important activity of the Institute's health services. M. F. Trice, director, heads a staff of two United States consultants and 20 Peruvian technicians. Among the latter are five physicians, five chemical engineers, and several laboratory experts.

About 30,000 persons are employed in the metal mines of Peru, bringing out zinc, silver, vanadium and copper ores. Silicosis, the disease resulting from inhaling dust, has been a constant and deadly menace to miners. The service made a systematic study of dust in the mines. Legislation was passed calling for the use of masks and other preventive measures. Periodic counts of dust, and regular checks on the health of miners indicate remarkable progress in three years' time.

The Education Division, established in 1943, came into being because of increasing recognition on the part of South American leaders that industrial and social progress depends on enlightened citizenship. In Peru, Lyle B. Pember is director of this activity. He and his ten North American specialists work in close cooperation with Col. Juan Mendoza Rodriguez, Peruvian minister of education, and 43 nationals.

Rural elementary education and vocational training are the two principal areas of activity in this service. An important task in rural communities has been to construct modern school buildings. Sixteen schools have been completed, and scores more are under

construction.

When former President Bustamante of Peru was minister to neighboring Bolivia, some years ago, he and the Bolivian minister of education worked out a plan for educating the Indian children of the *altiplano*—the high plateau of the Andes. The Institute, with cooperation of the Peruvian and Bolivian ministries of education, helped put the plan into effect. Now another neighbor, Ecuador, has joined in. The ministries of education exchange information on school laws, teaching materials and methods.

Increasingly, schools are becoming community centers under the work of the Institute. Parents are encouraged to come and see the work being done, to begin adult studies and to participate in parent-teacher activities. Groups similar to 4-H clubs of the United States are being sponsored.

Multiply the work of The Institute of Inter-American Affairs in Peru by its activities in 17 other countries, large and small, in Latin America, and its most important feature becomes apparent: It is setting the pattern for sound, profitable development of resources in the underdeveloped areas of this hemisphere. The investment of public funds is not intended as a permanent program either for the United States or for our neighbors, but rather as "pilot plant" operations to pave the way for private investment and cooperative enterprise.

But there is another result, immeasurable in its value. The usual frigid formality of international relations melts away in the atmosphere of close personal relations maintained by all hands working in the services. Members of the staffs are no longer "foreigners" one to the other. The effect is a continually deepening understanding that will strengthen for all time the structure of inter-American solidarity and peace.

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