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Trade With South America

INTERVIEW

WITH

HON. JAMES A. FARLEY

(Printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of
April 14, 1941)

Mr. GUFFEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an interview which Mr. John F. Cogswell had with Hon. James A. Farley, former Postmaster General. The interview was published in the Boston Post of Sunday, March 16, 1941.

There being no objection, the interview was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Sunday Post of March 16, 1941]

JIM FARLEY PREDICTS BOSTON SHIPPING BOOM—HUB NEAREST MAJOR UNITED STATES SEAPORT TO BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA—BUENOS AIRES HAS CLOSE SOCIAL, RACIAL TIES WITH NEW ENGLAND—NOTED POLITICAL LEADER, JUST BACK FROM SOUTH AMERICAN BUSINESS SURVEY, SAYS NAZIS' INFLUENCE DECIDEDLY ON WANE

(By John F. Cogswell)

The Honorable James A. Farley, big, glowing with health, affable as ever, just back from a 9-week "best vacation without a care in the world that I ever had," during which he visited nearly every nation in South America, left the shelter of the big desk in his New York office, came round front and sat down beside me.

"One of the greatest assets these United States have in South America and one which your port of Boston should find it especially easy to cash in on," he told me, "is the colony of nearly 100,000 Irish, among them an especially high percentage of business and cultural leaders, that I found in Buenos Aires.

"The very existence of this great colony from Eire was a surprise to me, something of a blow to my pride in being a student of the achievements of the Irish in the New World."

CONSORTING WITH PRESIDENTS

Mr. Farley had been consorting with Presidents and other high Government officials, ambassadors and ministers, big-shot business leaders, the great and near-great down there, all of whom persisted, according to the news dispatches, in viewing him as a looming national figure in spite of his return to private life.

He has come back full of enthusiasm for the war-sent opportunity of these United States to tie ourselves to Latin America with commercial bonds that will make us independent of European trade, establish a "hemispherical solidarity" that will leave both continents free and prosperous, no matter what the outcome of the war in Europe.

And that is especially important to Boston, as the nearest important American port to eastern South America, he assured me. It will probably mean a doubling, quadrupling, and more of the already tremendous and constantly increasing trade that is moving out of and into the port of Boston, in one of the finest, most modern fleets on the seas today.

But the famous Democratic leader simply had to tell me about that Irish colony in Buenos Aires before he expanded upon our glowing trade prospects below the Equator, told of the big men he had met and their attitude toward the United States, even before he chuckled over his meeting with Louis Firpo, the immortal Bull of the Pampas, whose iron fist sent Jack Dempsey catapulting over the ropes one memorable evening at the Yankee Stadium; Firpo, who had parlayed his ring winnings into affluence as a rancher, a real-estate promoter, and all-around businessman.

Quite evidently his discovery of that prosperous, public-spirited, internationally minded settlement of Irish down in Argentina interested Mr. Farley more than anything else he encountered on his long trip. I give you the story of the discovery, though, not as the great American told it to me, but as a representative of the weekly Southern Cross reported it in his paper, under the heading "Mr. James Farley comes to town—a great Irish-American."

This reporter, J. B. Sheridan, native of the Emerald Isle, came into the Plaza Hotel, Buenos Aires, called the Farley suite over the house telephone. It happened that Mr. Farley answered the call himself. Sheridan named his paper, explained that it was published in the interests of the 100,000 Irish Catholics in the city.

"What! One hundred thousand Irish in Buenos Aires! A paper published just for them in English!" the astonished Democratic leader ejaculated. "Man, you come right up here."

Sheridan got his interview all right, but if he came to get a message from one of our leading Irish-Americans to Irish-Argentines it didn't get into the paper. It is illuminating to find that he took up nearly all his space writing of Mr. Farley's personality. It wasn't until near the end of the interview that he thought to ask a question that has been worrying the Irish of Buenos Aires ever since the lend-lease bill got into the United States Senate.

"Is Senator BURTON WHEELER, who has been so vitriolic in his diatribes against President Roosevelt, of Irish descent?" the reporter wanted to know.

"I tell you definitely, Mr. Sheridan," Mr. Farley replied, "BURTON WHEELER hasn't a drop of Irish blood in his veins."

That was a comfort to the Southern Cross writer, and he was sure it would be, too, "to men of Irish blood in this southern land, who have felt somewhat ashamed that a man with Irish blood in his veins would attack the Bayard of democratic ideals in America."

Tomorrow being St. Patrick's Day, a couple of paragraphs which Mr. Farley pointed out to me on the front page of the Southern Cross will be of interest to all Boston, especially those of Catholic faith.

"A great many churches and chapels in Argentina possess altars or statues dedicated to St. Patrick," the item stated. "In many localities flourishing communities will gather at the feet of the patron saint on his feast day; in other, the Gaels have moved on.

"We know a certain camp town where the parish church boasts a splendid altar of St. Patrick. On St. Patrick's Day, the solitary remaining member of a family of long Irish-Argentine lineage never fails to have the altar profusely illuminated and bedecked with flowers."

It was only natural that Irish colony in remote South America should have proved one of the high points of interest in Mr. Farley's trip south of the Equator. He spent a great deal of time delving into their history, meeting the leading members of the community, and prizes as much as anything else brought back with him a book, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, written by the Reverend John S. Gaynor, P. S. M., editor of the Southern Cross.

SAME AS BOSTON IRISH

"The Irish of Buenos Aires are just the same sort that settled in Boston and spread out all over the United States," Mr. Farley told me. They're descendants of pioneers, many of whom migrated to South America three and four generations ago. Why, that weekly paper, "The Southern Cross," was established in 1875 and has flourished ever since.

"Just as has been the history of Irishmen in the United States, men whose grandfathers

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and great grandfathers came from the old country, one finds Irish names in positions of leadership all through Argentina—leaders in public life, in business, in the professions, in education, and the arts. But they're still just as full of love for Eire as are our own Irish-Americans. And it made me sort of homesick to hear an Irish accent, way down there, among those more lately from the other side.

"One day, I went to see a party of four-generation Buenos Aires Irish. None of them could speak English and an American newspaper correspondent was acting as interpreter. I saw him smiling and wanted to know why.

"It's the first time I ever heard Spanish with an Irish accent," he replied.

"And those South American Irish are just as important as they are interesting to us of the United States. One after another, they asked me about cousins, relatives to the 7th degree in Boston, New York, all the large cities of the United States, wondered if I had ever met them.

"They seem to have almost as great a love for our country as for the home land. They're all violently antagonistic to Nazi propaganda and strong advocates of closer relations between Argentina and the United States. They're a power down there, too, and their attitude should be of great value in establishing better trade relations."

Everything that Mr. Farley had to say regarding the Irish of South America indicates that they may prove to be our ace in the hole in establishing closer relations with the South American country that has been the slowest to respond to the good-neighbor policy.

The former Postmaster General believes that that should be especially important to Boston, in view of the increasingly great tonnage of traffic to and from South America moving through Boston Harbor. He was amazed at the commercial potentialities of all our neighbors to the south, believes that trade opportunities have hardly been touched, is sure that by wise methods an interchange of products can be developed that will give us new ideas of commercial development.

"Like most citizens of the United States, it is only lately that I have become South American conscious," he told me. "And this trip has been an eye opener."

He points out that we even failed to develop the business down there that we grabbed off during World War I, let it slip out of our grasp when Europe settled down, and began looking for export business again. But now we have an opportunity for commercial development even greater than during the last war, now that Europe has gone out of the exporting business altogether.

"Mine was a business trip," Mr. Farley said, "and I rather hurried along, but I had plenty of time and opportunity to make observations. Right now South America is just about in the same stage of development that the United States was at the time of the

Civil War. It's a continent of tremendous undeveloped natural resources.

"What they need more than anything else is aid in developing these resources and transportation facilities to make them accessible. Give them these and at the same time they'll be given a higher standard of living, greater purchasing power, the ability to buy from us what they can't now.

"It's time we got practical in South America. Too long our professional idealists and educators have been talking down to, patronizing the South Americans. That sort of talk doesn't go across with them at all.

"The administration's 'good-neighbor' policy has done a great deal to improve cultural relations. But culture alone doesn't buy bread, or automobiles, or machinery, or any of the thousands of things that South Americans would buy from us if they had the money, or goods to exchange.

HOW TO BE PRACTICAL

"By getting practical down there, I mean more of such projects as the recent loan of \$25,000,000 for the building of a steel mill in Brazil. Anything we do to enable them to develop their natural resources will not only foster friendship but give us a big cash profit.

"I'm in hopes that some method will be developed that will enable us to take some of the surplus Argentine beef, without seriously handicapping our own cattle raisers. Conversations in Argentina lead me to believe that we could import approximately 100,000 tons of their beef a year, without any severe effects upon the market for the domestic supply.

"But the purchase of even that relatively small amount would make a great and favorable change in their situation and develop a friendly feeling toward the United States in the country where it is most needed.

"We must remember that reciprocity is not a one-way street, that we have no right to expect South Americans to fall over themselves rushing to buy our goods, unless we reciprocate, make some sacrifices, too, to buy their products. They are particularly in need of our patronage, now that the war has cut off all their European markets, save Britain. And the difficulty of getting goods across the Atlantic makes that market a precarious one."

On the whole, Mr. Farley believes that most of South America is strongly in favor of fostering trade relations with the United States. The business leaders with whom he talked hold that such relations offer the greatest assurance of permanency, the solidest foundation for hemispherical well-being. That's their cold-blooded business view of the trade situation.

The man on the street—and always trust a man with James Farley's political experience to get close to the folks who cast the votes—he wants goods produced by the United States, feels that in them he gets most for his money. The inclination of the common people, too, is tinged by a feeling of

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friendliness and respect for North America such as they have never had before.

And government officials realize that in a changing, upset world their only hope lies in a strong economic tie-up with the United States. They are developing a real desire to cooperate.

"Leaving the dollar mark out, which idea seems to be going over the stronger down there, our 'good neighbor' policy or Nazi-Fascist propaganda?" I asked.

Mr. Farley pressed a buzzer button on his desk, asked his secretary to bring in clippings from the newspapers telling of his visits to various cities in representative countries. It was a big envelope chock full of the clippings with translations attached.

"My impression of the newspapers down there was that they are honest, sincere in their desire to reflect the opinion of the people, to bring their readers sound editorial opinion, to work for the things that are best for the Nation," the Democratic leader turned businessman told me.

"Maybe these editorial opinions will give part of the answer to your question."

Those newspaper writers certainly went to town on Mr. Farley's visit, refused to view him as anything save a great American public figure instead of a businessman on business bent. An editorial from Rio de Janeiro's *Correio da Manha* is typical, displays the tie-up with North American traditions with which South American newspapers are combating propaganda from abroad.

It happened that Mr. Farley landed in Rio on the first day of their celebrated carnival; it was also Washington's Birthday and the North American was wearing a picture of Washington on his lapel.

"The representative of a great free nation," the *Correio da Manha* editor wrote, "could not have worn a more appropriate symbol on coming in contact with the people of another nation who love liberty, George Washington, Simon Bolivar, San Martin, Jose Bonifacio—names that are remembered as of yesterday in these uncertain times when dictators are trying to destroy the freedom that great, inspired liberators founded in the Americas. * * *

"James Monroe, another leader whom civilization will consecrate when we are rid of those who still wish to rule on the theory of hate and ambition, created the structure of what we celebrate today as one of the most perfect realizations of the age: The neo-Monroeism that received its final touches at Lima, Panama, and Habana."

That's typical of South American newspaper opinion when balancing North American against totalitarian ideologies. Mr. Farley brought out another point, seldom considered when viewing the undoubtedly large German and Italian populations in some South American countries.

"Some sections do have large populations of descendants of Axis people," he said. "But everywhere they are gathered in close, compact colonies. They herd by themselves,

and have little to do with other citizens. Their very isolation, insularity reduces the effectiveness of their efforts in behalf of Hitler and Mussolini."

Mr. Farley was especially impressed with the friendliness toward the United States demonstrated at every turn in Brazil. He had long visits with President Getulio Vargas and with Dr. Oswaldo Aranha, long-time Brazilian Ambassador to the United States, now Vargas' right-hand man. With the government heads, our Democratic leader went to an "esado" or barbecue, given in his honor by the President of the Bank of Brazil, at Petropolis, Rio's summer resort.

Prominently displayed were Brazilian and American flags, side by side, at the entrance to the hacienda. President Vargas removed his hat, stood long silently gazing at the flags, then said that he prayed that they'd always be that way—side by side.

LEADERS IMPRESSED

"I've been coming in contact with men in public life for more than 30 years," Mr. Farley told me. "I believe that I have become a judge of men especially of men of prominence in government. And I'm happy to say that these leaders impressed me with their sincerity, their desire to advance their countries, and their people.

"President Vargas is modest and unassuming and like most big men I've met, easy to approach. I felt he was a kind of man one can know on short acquaintance. I'm in hopes that he can find time to pay a visit to the United States, so that our people can see what a really fine friend we have in him."

All down the west coast of South America, Mr. Farley found an intense friendship for the United States, evidenced not only by desire to do business with us, but also by tremendous enthusiasm for a united hemisphere against European ideas.

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He attributes this happy situation to two interlocking developments—the wisdom of businessmen from the United States in getting and caring for orders on the west coast and the facilities for rapid transportation that the Pan American-Grace Airlines have afforded since they took over from the German-controlled lines in Bolivia and extended service to the other Pacific nations.

"The planes are always crowded," Mr. Farley said. "They enable American firms' representatives to get around swiftly, keep in contact and these representatives are in truth real ambassadors of good will for our nation."

He did find plenty of evidences of Nazi activities all through South America, but he found no evidence of such efforts having any effect upon Government leaders.

"Government officials," he told me, "all realize that their interests are identical with ours and that close relations must be kept if this hemisphere is to go on in freedom and happiness; that European ideologies have nothing to offer us.

"We are particularly fortunate, too, in our Ambassadors and Ministers to all South American capitals. Norman Armour, in Argentina; Jefferson Caffery, in Brazil; and Claude G. Bowers, in Chile, are doing exceptionally fine jobs and enjoy the fullest confidence of the governments to whom they are accredited. It is hardly fair, though, to single out any particular representatives; all of them are doing great work.

"All in all, I think that the whole South American attitude toward attempts to influence thought toward nazi-ism or fascism were pretty well summed up in an editorial run during my visit by the *Diario Carioca* in Rio: 'All the nations of America feel that the moment is grave and that only together can they keep to the road that they have set for themselves.'"