

Summary of Oral History Transcript

Collado, Emilio G.

Interview conducted by T. Wilson and R. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library, on 1971-07-07

The first half of the interview addresses Collado's background, the various positions held while working for the U.S. Government (US Treasury, Federal Reserve Bank, Department of State, and Export-Import Bank), and his involvement in the ground work leading to the establishment of the IMF and the World Bank prior to his appointment in June '46 as first U.S. executive director in the Bank. While in the State Department, as Chief of the Financial and Monetary Affairs and Development division, he became involved in what eventually became the Bretton Woods Conference in the summer of 1944. This, according to Collado, was the culmination of a lengthy relationship between Lord Keynes [U.K. Treasury] and Harry D. White from the U.S. Treasury as well as others from the State Department in preparing plans for new international monetary and financial arrangements for the postwar world.

Subsequently, and immediately prior to joining the Bank he became director of the Office of Financial and Development Policy, dealing on the 'monetary' side, and very much second to the Treasury, in the eventual development of the International Monetary Fund and, on the 'development' side with what was to become the World Bank, and the Export-Import Bank Collado was also involved in the proposal for the development of the Inter-American Bank [1940] which failed ratification in the U.S. Senate at the time and was eventually established in 1958.

Collado stresses the importance of the U.S. Treasury's senior role with regard to international financial affairs. The U.S. Government's realization during World War II that it can play a much bigger role in aid programs. The establishment [in '43] of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), due in large part to the efforts of Dean Acheson [then Assistant Secretary of State]. Lend-lease aid ['41-'45, exceeded \$50 billion]. Underestimating the magnitude of postwar economic problems of reconstruction and development bringing about the realization of the need for a bigger aid program which in turn stimulated the Harvard address [June'47] by Marshall [then Secretary of State George C.] thus introducing the Marshall Plan in [April]'48. The U.S. Treasury's view of postwar economic conditions and its handling of them, as well as the State Department's view. The increasing political and economic difficulties between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in light of the Communist threat and the effects on aid programs. The Russians declining to join the Bretton Woods organizations. The diminished support for UNRRA, and Collado's involvement on the working level with Lord Keynes et al, in the negotiations with the British.

In mentioning the death of Lord Keynes in 1946 just after the Savannah meeting, Collado talks about Keynes the negotiator, and his paper published posthumously in the Economic Journal as being one of the great pieces of economic literature. And, he briefly talks about the CED [Committee for Economic Development, founded in '42].

Collado talks of his tenure at the World Bank and its top level leadership. His resignation as not being personal, but rather due to the change in management. The Bretton Woods Agreements Act, the ramifications of its application, and the troubles he encountered with the foreign executive directors and with then President Eugene Meyer. Also, the creation of the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems under the Act, chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury, and his role within. He expounds on the anti-Bank and anti-Fund attitude in the U.S. banking community. Opines

on President Truman's selection of Eugene Meyer as first President of the Bank, as well as on Meyer himself. Gives a retrospective self-assessment of his behavior after Meyer's resignation in December '46 as due to his youthful 36 years. In conclusion, he talks of a proposal in the records to appoint him president of the Bank and, how he did not consider himself to be an international figure fit for the post.