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January 9, 1962

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Dr. J. Will Harris
P. O. Box 156
Dilley, Texas

Dear Dr. Harris:

I trust that this letter finds you and Mrs. Harris well, and that you have had a happy Holiday Season. May 1962 be rich in blessings to you both.

Your most interesting and informative letter of December 18th is at hand, and I have read with care your narration of the beginnings both of Polytechnic Institute and of Sr. Juan Cancio Ortiz's Agricultural Institute in Lajas. Ever since coming to Puerto Rico I have been looking for some authoritative statement on this subject. Such verbal accounts as I have been given seemed difficult to harmonize, and it has been evident that the memory even of persons who were on the scene at the time was not always perfect. A section of opinion that from time to time has become vocal, has emphasized the work of Juan Cancio Ortiz, but as he has been extremely feeble in recent years, I have not tried to get from him any statement on the matter. In fact, I have never talked with him at all. He had his grandson here as a student two years ago, and I became acquainted with the boy's father, Don Santiago Pla, who is a fine Christian gentleman. It has never seemed advisable for me without factual data, to keep alive what looked like a controversial issue. Instead, I have cultivated cordial relations with members of the Cancio Ortiz family, and I do not believe I have thereby detracted from the distinction due to you. I have had the feeling that Polytechnic Institute's history shows evidence of a divine purpose, and that this institution is part of God's plan for the extension of His Kingdom. Men come and men go, each making his contribution to the work "as the Lord gives to every man", but "God giveth the increase". The third chapter of First Corinthians is applicable to the whole question.

In the interest of accuracy, you might suggest to Dr. Morgan, secretary of Polytechnic Board of Trustees a corrected wording for paragraph 3 of Action 1961-11-23 of the minutes. The significant thing is that three persons, whose names have appeared as members of a Board of Trustees of this college, died within the year. It was deemed appropriate to record this fact in the minutes and to send condolences to the families. I was present at the meeting, but heard nothing that in any way should, as you say, "cause you to boil".

Dr. Harris
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January 8, 1951

Dr. L. W. Harris
7.0. Box 155

I am anxious to know where you got the idea that on the coming Founders Day it is proposed "to honor him as the founder or the initiator of the idea of the Polytechnic". A committee of the faculty has been working for some months on the plans for the Fortieth Anniversary celebration. They have conferred with me several times, and we have discussed their plans, but I have no knowledge of any intention to honor Don Juan Cancio Ortiz. I would doubt the wisdom of making any statement during the celebration about his connection with Polytechnic. You would agree, I am sure, that the controversial aspects should be avoided. Gratitude to God for the accomplishments of the past and an expression of faith in Him for the future are much more to the point.

In reference to the 40th Anniversary celebration, the enclosed mimeographed pages have just been issued by the Committee referred to above. The plan herein outlined is to be presented to the Faculty at its January meeting. I feel sure that the proposal to invite you and Mrs. Harris will be approved, and that, if you can come, we shall have the pleasure of your presence at the celebration. You will have a further word from us before long.

With kind regards to you and Mrs. Harris, in which Mrs. Seel joins, I am, Sir,
Cordially yours,

Edward G. Seel
President

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In the interest of accuracy, you might suggest to the Secretary of Polytechnic Board of Trustees a corrected wording for paragraph 2 of Action 1951-11-25 of the minutes. The original text is that three persons, whose names have appeared as members of a Board of Trustees of this college, died within the year. It was deemed appropriate to record this fact in the minutes and to read accordingly to the minutes. I was present at the meeting, but heard nothing that in any way should, as you say, "cause you to bill."