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MEXICO TODAY

Country's Future Holds Promise, Pe

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY
Latin America Writer of The Star

Lost of five articles.

MEXICO CITY — Mexico's future is fraught with peril as well as promise. The immediate problem for President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz and the Party of Revolutionary Institutions is how to avoid another clash with restless young Mexicans, at least until PRI can select a president for next year's almost automatic victory. Six prominent men have been mentioned and the closed-door selection process is already under way.

The leading candidate is 46-year-old Minister of Government Luis Echeverria, a PRI wheelhorse. His cabinet post has often been a stepping stone to the presidency and makes him one of the most influential men in Mexico.

Another outbreak of violence between young students and security forces, however, could eliminate Echeverria as a candidate. Until the bloody clash last

autumn in the capital between the army and demonstrators, Alfonso Corona del Rosal, regent of the federal district was regarded as the frontrunner.

But Corona holds the rank of major general as well as the title of "licenciado" (lawyer) and because of his soldier background, insiders feel the 63-year-old mayor of Mexico City is no longer in the running.

Martinez an Intimate

Dr. Emilio Martinez Manautou, secretary of the presidency and personal physician to the president, is as close to the incumbent as any man. He is only 50 and his role as a close presidential adviser makes him a prime candidate. But Mexicans are sensitive about what they call "continuismo" and this may erase Martinez from the list.

Foreign Minister Antonio Carrillo Flores is brilliant and popular but he himself believes he became too identified in the public mind with the United States during long service as ambassador to Washington.

Finance Minister Antonio Ortiz Mena probably will be the victim of a Mexican tradition against selecting the nation's top money man for the presidency. The rationale is that a finance minister inevitably is too closely identified with vested interests and foreign investors.

Two dark horses are Gil Preciado, minister of agriculture and former governor of the state of Jalisco, and Antonio Rocha, former attorney general and now governor of San Luis Potosi.

Decision Awaited

PRI's decision probably will be known by September or October. Barring highly unlikely intervention by the armed forces, whoever PRI selects will become Mexico's president next year.

PRI, which is the same thing as saying the government of Mexico, now must walk a tightrope between the angry students on one side and the resentful army on the other. The prognosis is that Mexico will be able to avert another confrontation like that of last October and preserve civilian, consensual succession.

If government officials have any idea what to do about the frightening birth rate in the Catholic country, they are not openly espouse birth control or family planning. It can only

try to restructure the nation to accommodate a population that can more than double itself every 20 years.

The trust now is to attract foreign investment, new industry and ever more tourists to create jobs both in business and service-type jobs for the millions coming of age every year.

One exciting concept involves plans by U.S. interests to make use of Mexican roads, railways and ports for passage of North American products to overseas markets.

Oil Trade Weighed

One such idea involves the huge Prudhoe Bay oil field in Alaska. The new super-tankers are too large for the Panama Canal. Planners are thinking of shipping the Alaskan oil south to Salina Cruz on Mexico's west coast and piping it across to the Gulf of Mexico at the narrow waist of the Isthmus of Tehauntepec.

Another plan would send Arizona products by rail and road from Nogales across the state of Sonora to an outlet at the Mexican port at Guaymas a route cheaper for Arizona shippers than to California ports.

Like Argentina and Brazil—alone with Mexico the

most advanced nations in America—Mexico is all industrially geared to take advantage of new markets may be opened to the south the Latin Common Market or comes into being.

It is a mark of Mex

progress that the Guatemalans and some other Central Americans have fallen into the habit of calling Mexico the "colossus of the north."

If Mexico's birth rate was as manageable as its stable currency, balance of payments, economic growth and international credit rating, Mexico would be in excellent

condition. Foreign Minister Carrillo Flores, an eternal optimist, made the point this way when asked if it disturbed him that Latin America was far down on the U.S. list of priorities.

"Not at all," he laughed. "Would it disturb me if my doctor told me I was low on his list of priorities?"

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