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Oval Office

[The President is talking with Dr. Merlin K. DuVal (“Monty”), Assistant Secretary of Health]

DuVal: [. . .] We’ve become very fond of Mexico, we go there as often as possible.

Nixon: Do you? [Unintelligible] across from the Tucson area, Mexicali?

DuVal: No, further east, Nogales.

Nixon: Nogales, Nogales, Nogales of course.

DuVal: We’re very much at home in Mexico and we travel back and forth freely and my wife does very well with Spanish and we have a lot of friends down as far as . . .

Nixon: Do you have any property? Did you buy anything?

DuVal: No, but we should.

Nixon: You should. No, really, I think it’s an excellent investment. It’s a stable country, one of the few in Latin America – it has the stability, and to the extent that they’ll let you, you should really have some property down there. Great people too, aren’t they?

DuVal: Absolutely marvelous.

Nixon: You’ve got to get to know the Mexicans. And I – so many people particularly in my state in California – I mean and they sorta look down their noses at the Mexicans. Here in the East, as you know, everybody is obsessed about the Blacks, and the Mexicans are put upon much worse than the Blacks from an economic standpoint. They’re in a horrible condition in Los Angeles and other places, but ah . . . they have such *quality*. They can’t manage anything very well, but – generally speaking –

DuVal: Even if they can’t –

Nixon: . . . They can’t do anything very well! But on the other hand they work, they’re loyal, they have a . . . a warmth, a warmth that is very real. I mean, most of the Latins are poets.

DuVal: And they’re very warm.

Nixon: Yeah that's right. It's true! It's true!

DuVal: We always think of being prejudiced [unintelligible] . . .

Nixon: It's quite...

DuVal: . . . but it's not fair.

Nixon: It's quite different. It is very – it's really quite different from the Black problem, it's a different, uh . . . The Blacks also have their great assets and liabilities. But the Mexicans – only those who live with them and know them can appreciate them. I went to school with them of course, in California.

[Conversation continues on unrelated topics.]