

# New Argentina President Faces Giant Task

By PHIL NEWSOM  
UPI Foreign News Analyst

A white-haired, fragile-appearing country doctor has taken over the job of proving that Argentina can exist as a practicing democracy.

He is Dr. Arturo Umberto Illia, under whom Argentina returned last week to constitutional government. His chances for success will depend in large part upon the control he is able to exercise over Argentina's military factions on the one hand and the followers of former dictator Juan D. Peron on the other.

For the more than 10 years since Peron's fall, the two groups have kept the nation in an unceasing state of turmoil. From the vantage point of a recent visit to Argentina, it is possible to predict that President Illia is in for some lumps at home and at least occasional clashes with the United States.

For one thing, he has been accused of being a rabid Argentine nationalist. He already has announced plans to annul the foreign oil contracts which helped to make Argentina self-supporting in oil.

These will be taken over by the state-owned Y.P.F. Oil Company.

**Denies Red Leanings**

He also has been accused of being pro-Communist. This he denies, but he believes Communists should have the right to

organize and express their views.

The Venezuelan regime of President Romulo Betancourt held similar views in its earlier days and learned the hard way that Communist expression of views comes in violence and in unceasing conspiracy against existing order.

The view is correct to bring into conflict with Argentina's military and suggests a leniency toward Castro's Cuba which will not endear him to the United States.

The enormity of his task at home is illustrated by the fact that Argentina's deficit this year will run to around \$200 million, that economic development is at a standstill and that unemployment in a country of around 21 million now is estimated at around the million mark.

The two sorest spots in the Argentine economy are the state-owned railroads and the Y.P.F. Oil Company.

Among other things, Illia has promised "efficient administration" of the railroads, a task no Argentine leader before him has been able to accomplish.

**Heavy Rail Deficit**

Like the Y.P.F. company, the railroads are heavily

As recently as a century ago, the tomato was believed by some Americans to be poisonous.

featherbedded. The railroad deficit this year will just about equal the national deficit of around \$200 million.

Past government efforts have resulted in a reduction of railroad employees from 236,000 to around 141,000. But the system is in bad repair and Argentine farmers refuse to trust it with their crops. U.S. experts believe at least 15,000 to 20,000 miles of track should be abandoned.

The Y.P.F., in addition to its own enterprises, at present takes all the crude oil produced by the foreign companies. But it also is heavily in the red, and has been unable to

pay its producers. In theory it should contribute substantially to the country's highway and power projects, but in these programs also it is far in arrears.

Illia says he has a program to restore full employment within a year and at the same time protect wages and currency from inflation.

He will need to be the miracle man of the year.

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