



# The Department of Tourism. A pioneering institution for the promotion of tourism in Chile (1929-1942)<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract.* This article analyzes the origins and development of the Chilean Department of Tourism, created during the administration of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1927-1931). The Department of Tourism fell under the Ministry of Development and was created as a result of the Tourism Promotion Law of 1929. It was charged with the promotion and inspection of tourism activities. This article argues that the creation of this department was framed as part of the Chilean state's strategic vision which understood tourism as a central economic activity, a vehicle for the modernization of the country and a source of fiscal revenue.

*Keys:* Tourism, Chile, promotion, Department of Tourism.

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## **Introduction**

In recent years the history of tourism has become an object of lively interest on the part of historians. While in the 1970s and 1980s there were few historical studies on tourism in Latin America, recently this type of research has expanded (Pastoriza, 2002; Ospital, 2005; Da Cunha, 2010; Armas, 2018). Such studies are inspired by the importance of tourism as an engine of economic growth and the fact that numerous economic, social, and cultural practices converge in the practice of tourism (Corbin, 1995; Boyer, 2005; Meethan, 2001). One recent study on Latin America as a whole analyzes the economic scope of tourism within a broad historical and geographic framework (Grant, 2021).

The study of tourism has made it possible to understand the formation of a national identity in the United States, as well as the promotion of nationalism in fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union, at a time when transportation and communications networks were expanding and a market for domestically produced goods was emerging (Shaffer, 2001). Various governments and ideologies saw the development of internal tourism as a tool to satisfy the consumer demands of their populations, and as a way to promote their political models (Baranowski, 2007; Koenker, 2013; Tizzoni, 2014). Researching tourism also makes it possible to explain post-WWI transformations, especially the democratization of welfare that took place first in Europe and the United States, and then in some Latin American countries, thanks to improvements in the living conditions of industrial workers after the Great Depression (Torre & Pastoriza, 2002).

While the practice of tourism has a long history, Corbin (1993) points out that mass tourism emerged in the 1930s as a result of organized labor's demands for free time and the enjoyment of leisure (Veblen, 2004). In addition, the state played an important role in the creation of a leisure industry, viewing recreational and amusement activities as an escape valve for the tensions inherent in urban life as well as a tool for social integration and the expansion of consumption—as was promoted by the dominant ideologies of the time. The state was also responsible for the improvement of roads that provided access to tourism activities, and for the standardization or creation of regulations that routinized leisure activities (Piglia, 2008, 2018), in addition to the establishment of the first government agencies that concerned themselves with tourism (Booth, 2009).

The debates in the 1930s and 1940s about how free time should be used were the result of improvements in labor conditions and the shortening of the work week. In tandem, the effects of leisure time on the moral and material conditions of the population began to be studied (Yáñez, 2016).

It should be noted that the notion of free time is a modern concept linked to industrial societies with consolidated labor identities, which allows for the separation of productive space from domestic space, and the labor condition from that of the itinerant (Castel, 1997). In Latin America, the concept of social tourism (or tourism of the masses) came into popular usage starting in the 1940s in the context of various populist experiences, such as those in Argentina and Brazil. These countries promoted paid vacations for popular sectors and internal tourism as a way of reinforcing national values (Scarzanella, 1988; Cicalese, 2002; Pastoriza, 2008).

In the case of Chile, the history of the development of tourism has also been the object of recent studies. One article argues that the transformation of urban areas and improvements in access were key for promoting travel. Rodrigo Booth analyzes the role of the private sector—such as the automobile association—in conjunction with the state in the construction of the coastal highway between Viña del Mar and Concón. This road's reinforced concrete made it one of the most modern on the continent (Booth, 2014). The same author also studies the construction of hotels, and the resultant redefinition of landscape, for the case of northern and southern Chile (Booth, 2013). Silva and Henríquez (2017) investigate how leisure time and vacations helped to shape a new social subject capable of reappropriating national spaces and landscapes. The fact that many of the policies promoting leisure and vacations were implemented under the auspices of the Popular Front (1938–1946) tended to reinforce the idea that recreational practices were the way in which to integrate workers into the nation (Silva, 2018). In the case of the initial efforts to promote tourism, the role of the state railway has been studied through an analysis of two emblematic magazines: *En Viaje* and *Guía del Veraneante* (García & Valdivia, 2012). Finally, Vidal (2018) takes on the problems resulting from efforts to promote Chilean tourism between 1929 and 1959, emphasizing the lack of resources and a clear policy on what the image of the country should be. It is important to note that the pioneering character of Chilean tourism policies was noted early on by Peruvian intellectuals and businessmen, who used the Chilean experience to pressure their own government into providing greater support for their plans to promote tourism (Rice, 2021, pp. 150-153).

This review of the literature on the history of tourism in Chile reveals that as of yet there has been no research on the institutional framework for tourism development in Chile, nor studies on the Department of Tourism. In order to better understand this phenomenon, the present article focuses on this department, created in 1929 as the first public entity responsible for tourism development and promotion. The emphasis is on the objectives,

scope, and main achievements of the department between 1929 and 1942, under the presidencies of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1927–1931) and Juan Antonio Ríos (1942–1946). The central hypothesis is that the role of the state was fundamental in providing the initial impetus for the promotion and development of tourism in Chile, due to the economic support it received during this period from the Ibáñez administration.

Given the relative paucity of research on tourism in Chile, this study is exploratory and, at the same time, descriptive since it seeks to identify the characteristics of the development of the Department of Tourism. The sources used include ministerial documents, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and parliamentary discussions. The article is divided into three main sections. The first analyzes the vision of tourism and its potential during the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo. This section also emphasizes the need to develop tourism at the time and to transform it into an industry that promotes foreign exchange; and presents some indicators of the achievements obtained. The second section analyzes the establishment and functions of the Department of Tourism, created through Tourism Law No. 4585 (1929). The final section describes the various ups and downs undergone by the Department in the mid-1930s (as well as the creation of the Tourism Service in 1935) until its incorporation in 1942 into the General Office for Information and Culture within the Ministry of Culture, itself part of the Ministry of the Interior.

## **1. Tourism during the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1927-1931)**

In recent decades, the social sciences' growing interest in discursive practices and the construction of imaginaries has helped us understand how tourist destinations are created in countries or regions. The first travel guides disseminated information about the attractions of major world cities and territories, and were part of the information publishing sector that helped mold tourism circuits (Diego, 2014). During the 1910s, there was unprecedented interest in initiating tourism promotion activities in many countries. Some Latin American authors note that amid their independence centenary celebrations, various countries made efforts to present themselves as modern nations (Tenorio, 1998). Many travel guides disseminated in Latin America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries reflected the interest of officials and editors in showcasing the urban and architectural transformations taking place in the region's cities (Mendoza, 2016; González, 2017). In the case of Chile, the first travel guide was published emblematically on the occasion of the country's centenary of independence in 1910. This guide was written

by the Sociedad Editora Internacional, and demonstrates that at the time there was no real guide for the traveler visiting Chile:

To fill this vacuum, which would be profoundly noticeable during the centenary celebrations, because of the large number of foreigners who will visit us, comes this Publication that at the same time fulfills the patriotic objective of being used as a practical and effective publicity, given that it will go to other countries to demonstrate the truth about who we are and the degree of progress that we have achieved during the first century of our life as a free people.<sup>2</sup> (Sociedad Editora Internacional, 1910, p. 1)

Thus, if tourism is understood as a set of social practices that involve the movement of people to destinations previously unknown to them, and these trips constitute opportunities to gain knowledge and acquire new experiences (Navarro, 2015), then it is fundamental for countries to create their own diversified tourist circuits.

Some cities created innovative public–private partnerships that brought together hotel, gastronomic, and transportation entrepreneurs. These partnerships aimed to promote municipal or regional tourism through “local tourism promotion committees,” whose mission was to carry out improvements in the lodging and entertainment offered by cities, as well as publishing tourist brochures (García & Valdivia, 2012). In the late 1920s, some municipalities sought to regularize tourism promotion and information services, as was the case of Viña del Mar and Valparaíso.

Nevertheless, despite these interesting experiences, it was only under the government of General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1927–1931) that there was a concerted effort to develop tourism on the national level. As part of a program of structural reforms oriented toward modernizing the state through high levels of public investment and borrowing, his government created new departments and ministries such as the Ministry of Development, the General Treasury of the Republic, the Department of Government Procurement, the Carabiniers of Chile,<sup>3</sup> the Chilean Airforce, and the national airline (Línea Área Nacional) (Ibáñez, 1983; Yáñez, 2018). When it came to tourism promotion, investment in the beach resort towns was incentivized. A notable example is Viña del Mar, where infrastructure and hotels were improved and a casino was established. This transformed

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2 All translations from Spanish are by *Apuntes*.

3 Translator's note: Carabineros de Chile, the national law enforcement police.

the town into a destination par excellence for tourists from the capital city of Santiago (Castagneto, 2010).

The Ministry of Development was a key vehicle for the implementation of the Ibáñez government's economic growth policy. Created in 1927 by Decree with the Force of Law No. 7912, its goals included the promotion of industry and production; agricultural and livestock development; agrarian, commercial, and industrial credit; regulation of forestry and navigation; irrigation policies and water concessions; and infrastructure and communications. In this context, it was evident that responsibility for the formulation of a tourism policy should fall on the Ministry of Development, to the extent that its officials understood tourism's importance as an economic activity. According to the Chilean ambassador to Italy, the increase in foreign tourists coming to Chile—thanks to the boom in transatlantic steamship companies—made it necessary to improve infrastructure and services so “that [they] are equivalent, at least in part, to conditions that the tourists who come to our country experience in the United States and any European country.”<sup>4</sup>

The arrival of foreign tourists to Latin America, while still in its early stages, was significant enough to attract the attention of politicians and technocrats interested in assuring revenues for the state. Parliamentarians were interested in providing resources for the promotion of tourism because, in their view, this guaranteed the arrival of tourists with high purchasing power: “Publicity about our beautiful attractions in Argentina and the United States, carried out in just one year and in conditions that are as yet incipient for economic reasons, resulted in sixty percent more visits than in the best of previous years” (Cámara de Diputados, January 22, 1930).

Employing a more cultural approach, historian Stefan Rinke describes how, starting in the 1910s—when the first US ships began to ply the coasts of Latin America—the arrival of US tourists attracted the interest of their compatriots and press at home, and a stereotypical image of the *yankee* tourist emerged as a superficial subject in search of exotic memories (Rinke, 2014, pp. 74–75).

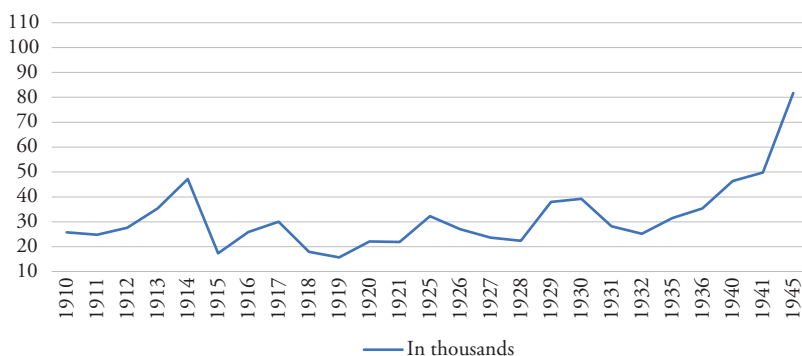
External demand was linked to the arrival of tourists to Chile using a variety of routes by sea and by land. In the early 20th century the maritime route was practically the only one possible, given the steamship companies whose ships connected Europe and the United States to the port of Valparaíso. But statistics show that from 1913 tourists started to arrive by land,

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4 Ramón Subercaseaux, Chilean ambassador to Italy, *La Nación* (January 26, 1929).

especially via the Transandian Railway (Ferrocarril Transandino) connecting Chile and Argentina, and by 1926 more passengers arrived by land than by sea. In 1929, statistics record the first arrivals by plane: in 1929, 110 passengers arrived; in 1930, 287 did so; and in 1931, 261. By 1941, this figure had climbed substantially to 5,468. The average increase in arrivals to Chile between 1908 and 1942 was 3% annually, though it fluctuated. Still, it is surprising that the number of arrivals doubled between 1940 and 1945: from 46,000 people in 1940 to 81,000 in 1945 (Figure 1).

Figure 1  
Progression of arrivals in Chile (1910-1945)



Source: *Anuario estadístico de la República de Chile* (1914-1945).

The types of statistics kept at the time do not allow us to distinguish between arrivals of foreign tourists and arrivals of Chilean nationals, though the data do coincide with information published by the press at the time, at least when it comes to the rate of increase in tourism.<sup>5</sup> The average daily expenditures were calculated at CLP<sup>6</sup>\$ 150 per tourist, with an average stay of 15 days. Taking into account that the exchange rate in 1929 was an average of CLP\$ 8.25 per dollar, each tourist spent around CLP\$ 18 a day.

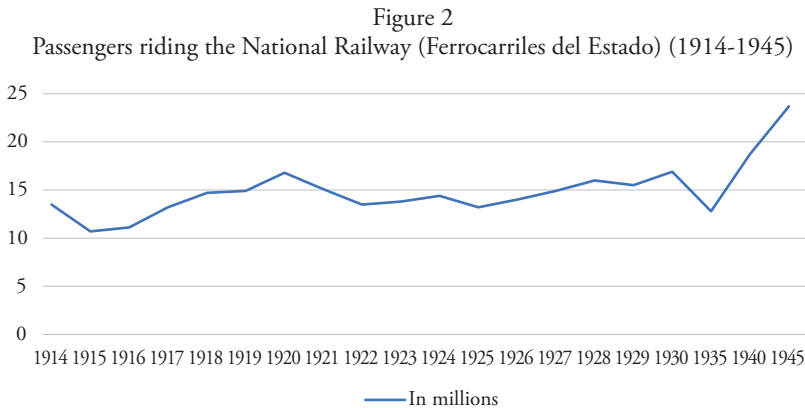
Internal tourism began to be of significance when railway lines connecting different sections of the country were built. Starting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an extensive rail network (both public and private) was built in Chile. By 1900, the network stretched for 2,000 km (without counting private lines) and by 1940 it had tripled in size to 5,924 km. The growth of railways made it possible to offer a variety transfers through a central

5 It was reported in the press that in 1927 a modest number of 1,485 tourists arrived while in 1932, the number was reported as 12,000 (*La Nación*, May 28, 1929).

6 Translator's note: CLP = Chilean peso.

network, with its respective branches, that carried millions of passengers each year (República de Chile, 1940).

Figure 2 shows that the demand for rail trips stagnated in the 1920s. This can be explained by the saltpeter crisis after World War 1 and the economic crisis of 1929, which impacted Chile in 1931. It was not until 1935 that the number of passengers once again reached the level of 1931. In any case, this number remained relatively stable until bouncing back in 1940 as a result of the wholesale implementation of the first agreements between the National Railway and the Workers Insurance Fund (Caja del Seguro Obrero), which allowed thousands of workers to ride the railroads at a reduced cost. The Central South Network (Red Central Sur), which linked Santiago with Puerto Montt, together with its branches, transported 95% of all passengers riding the public railroads. This is not only because most of the Chilean population lived in the central–southern part of the country but also because of the promotion of tourist attractions in that area.



Source: *Anuario estadístico de la República de Chile* (1914-1945)

This increase in both external and internal demand prompted the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1927–1931) to invest in improving infrastructure, connectivity, and services. Thus, at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, the conditions were there for the creation of an entity to promote and oversee tourist activities within a regulatory and institutional framework that no longer depended on the initiatives of individuals or was limited to administrative divisions with limited powers. Thus, in 1929 the Department of Tourism was created by the first Law for the Promotion of Tourism.



## 2. Department of Tourism (1929)

The Department of Tourism, which fell under the Ministry of Development, can be considered the first state institution charged with the promotion and regulation of tourism in Chile. In mid-1928, the executive submitted a draft law for the promotion of tourism, which included the creation of a Department of Tourism, to the legislative branch. This measure was discussed with a sense of urgency during the months from October 1928 to January 1929. The senate issued a report underlining the importance of tourist inflows as a source of income, as well as noting the natural beauties of the country (Cámara de Diputados, November 20, 1928). Parliamentarians viewed the creation of a Department of Tourism positively, though there were motions backed by the Chamber of Commerce to create an institute or a trust—following the Spanish model—that did not depend directly on state (Cámara de Diputados, November 26, 1928). While this idea did not attract support, the Chamber of Deputies proposed the creation of a Consultative Council to advise on the Department of Tourism, which would include representatives from different government entities as well as the hoteliers' association, shipping companies, and advertisers' associations (Cámara de Diputados, December 5, 1928). In the end, the senate rejected this idea and approved the creation of the Department of Tourism as proposed by the government (Cámara de Diputados, January 31, 1929). This entity was tasked with the following:

1. Promoting, both within and outside Chile, tourism centers and the natural beauty of the country.
2. Overseeing the display and distribution of posters, pamphlets, films, and other materials intended to expand knowledge about tourism regions or centers. Newspapers, magazines or periodical publications were exempt from these activities.
3. Promoting the construction or establishment of hotels, beach resorts, hot springs, and other sites to be used to lodge or provide stays for travelers or tourists and participating in the examination and approval of projects to construct or create such establishments.
4. Overseeing the application of exact and uniform prices that the owners or administrators of hotels or inns were expected to set for their establishments. These prices were not to be raised during the corresponding period, except in exceptional periods or circumstances with the prior authorization of the Tourism Section and only up to 25%.
5. Overseeing the operation of any enterprise that organized or carried out tourism tours.

6. Authorizing and overseeing group tourism tours organized by enterprises and requiring assurances for due implementation of their programs.
7. Assuring the conservation of natural beauties, national sites, treasures, and monuments, and, in accordance with existing regulations, preparing proposals for the central government or municipalities regarding the necessary measures to assure these goals.
8. Proposing appropriate measures to facilitate communication about tourism sites, and studying and proposing measures for tourists to travel within the country in the most comfortable way possible.
9. Assuring compliance with this law and the regulations provided for its application.

Financing for this department came from taxes imposed on the national railways, maritime transport, hotels, and income from foreign tourists. In addition, it received income from the sale of publications and photographs, fines for violations of the law, and general funds from the national budget. The average annual budget in 1928, 1929, and 1930 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
Annual Budget of the Department of Tourism, 1928–1930 (in Chilean pesos: CLP)

Item	Budget
Department Head	CLP\$ 30,000
Architectural assistant	CLP\$ 21,000
Draftsman	CLP\$ 12,000
Typist	CLP\$ 4,800
Publications	CLP\$ 28,915
Films	CLP\$ 11,835
Workshop and photographic laboratory	CLP\$ 44,755
Expenses for the South American Tourism Congress	CLP\$ 30,000
Production of graphic materials, maps, etc.	CLP\$ 2,500
Radiotelephony advertisements	CLP\$ 1,500
Startup costs	CLP\$ 6,000
Total	CLP\$ 193,305

Source: Ministerio de Fomento (1932).

As can be seen in Table 1, the department's budget included funds for staff, promotion of tourism, and improvement of vacation spots. At its height, its staff numbered 31 people, including translators, linotype operators, lithographers, photographers, draftsmen, and engravers. In addition,

there was a network of inspectors, supported by the Internal Tax Service (Servicio de Impuestos Internos), who oversaw fulfillment of various clauses of the tourism law and applied the indicated fines (República de Chile, 1931).

Promotion was one of the most important functions of the Department of Tourism and, it would seem, this was a policy common to Latin American states, which saw tourism as a way of positioning themselves on the international travel market that arose as result of the crisis on the European continent in the context of WWI and the subsequent economic turmoil. The *Boletín de Informaciones* of the Ministry of Development, citing an article from a Spanish publication, boasted about the effects of Chilean advertising in Europe:

And, it is so much the case that other manifestations have been added to the symptoms noted above, such as the elimination of certain taxes in France and the evocative communication received by the Tourism Section of the Chilean Ministry of Development from Touring Italy, which, among other things, refers to the publicity coming from Chile as something “admirable; you are eclipsing Switzerland,” an unequivocal confession of the soon-to-be victory due in equal parts to the efforts of each of the republics of Hispano-America. (*Boletín de Informaciones*, 1930, p. 1)

Officials saw the work of promoting tourism not only as an endeavor to open up the country to foreign visitors but also as a way of providing information about commercial and industrial achievements, without skimping on cooperation between private enterprises and the state in the area of publicity. To this end, cooperation agreements were entered into with enterprises, diplomatic contacts established with embassies, and foreign missions carried out, which included taking advantage of training voyages aboard the corvette *General Baquedano*.<sup>7</sup>

According to the budget for the three-year period 1928–1930, tourist promotion resources were to focus on the preparation of posters, photographs, and films, which were sent to different capitals and would be part of shows and exhibitions (Image 1). To this end, a photographic workshop was set up and two films were produced: *Algunos balnearios de Chile* (Seaside Resorts in Chile) and *El sur de Chile* (The South of Chile).<sup>8</sup> In addition, three pamphlets were published: *Chile país de turismo* (Chile, a Tourism Country), *Sur de Chile* (The South of Chile), *Balnearios de Chile* (Seaside

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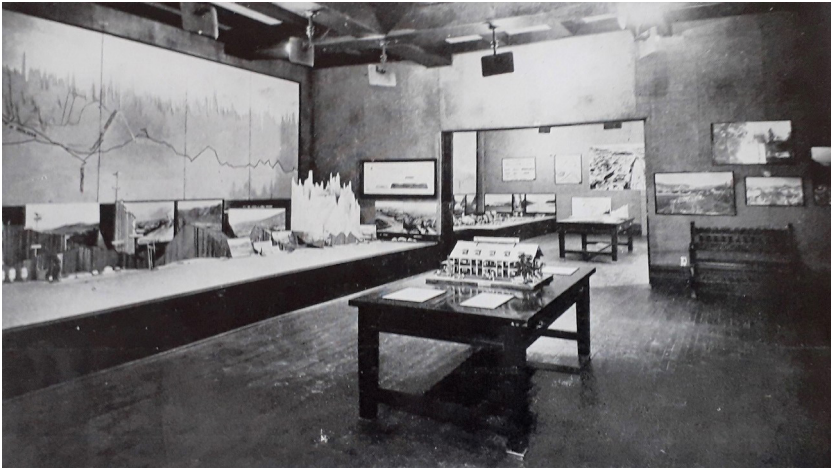
7 Archive of the Ministerio de Fomento, Record of May 17, 1929, vol. 236, 1929.

8 Archive of the Ministerio de Fomento, Decree of July 10, 1928, vol. 73, 1928.

Resorts in Chile), *Termas de Chile* (Hot Springs in Chile), and *Viajes de turismo* (Tourist Trips). In addition, there were plans for radio advertising in both Chile and Argentina, services for tourists, and different types of photography and poster contests. Finally, CLP\$ 10,000 were set aside to finance a delegation to the First Congress on Tourism in Buenos Aires.

The Department of Tourism's foremost promotional vehicle was the *Boletín de Informaciones*, which served as a way to publicize its activities as well as addressing national and international tourists. The latter was accomplished primarily by providing train schedules and information on hotels and tourist destinations.

Image 1  
Exhibition Hall of the Department of Tourism



Source: Silva (1931, p. 164).

Starting in 1930, the Department of Tourism took on a new responsibility when the Ministry of Development created an Institute for Hotel Education, whose goal was to educate suitable staff members to provide services to tourists (Yáñez, 2018).

### 3. The Tourist Service (1935)

In 1931, amid an economic crisis, government officials decided to close the Department of Tourism. One of the arguments put forward in the Congress was that there was no justification for retaining a department that had such a large budget. Deputy González Videla noted that:

In the situation in which the country finds itself, when more and more employees are daily being let go, when public ser-

vants who have served for more than 40 years are being thrown out onto the streets, when there are more than fifty thousand unemployed, it is inconceivable that there is a law that only protects foreign tourists at the expense of our own industry and our own citizens, since this results in pitfalls and tax payments for hotel owners so that they [foreign tourists] can travel on our railroads. (Cámara de Diputados, August 18, 1931)

Nevertheless, in order to deal with the series of complications resulting from the closure of the Department of Tourism, especially when it came to inspections, the decision was made to reopen the department in 1932, albeit with fewer personnel: a chief inspector and three civil servants. This shows that the conditions did not exist for expanding the bureaucracy in areas that were not considered a priority. The argument used by the government junta—led by Carlos Dávila—to justify the reopening was that its elimination had led to “a large fall in the monies received by the Treasury from this sector,” which went from CLP\$ 492,050 in 1930 to CLP\$ 156,310 in 1932 (República de Chile, 1932). This—added to the fact that the annual salaries of the personnel hired was no higher than CLP \$ 58,000—indicate that budgetary factors were much more important in reopening the department than was the promotion of tourism.<sup>9</sup> Thus, with the clear objective of tax revenues, the respective decree set out the tasks of these officials as “the supervision of tax payment and the rights that the aforementioned law established for the benefit of the Treasury, and also to oversee its fulfillment and compliance with all the other laws, regulations, and decrees related to tourism that are in force” (República de Chile, 1932).

Later, in 1935, the government of Arturo Alessandri (1932–1938) created the Tourism Service within the Ministry of Development. Its establishment was justified by the need to accompany and sustain the recovery of tourism as an economic activity and a source of income. This conception continued to inspire the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Development throughout the Alessandri administration. In a detailed article, the director of the Tourist Service, Domingo Oyarzún, called for confronting the problems affecting tourism, referring to state support: “With this evidence, it is understandable that the State cannot remain aloof from tourism, all the more so if we consider that the great regulatory force that is the State—which manages all the vital resources of the country—[and] owns all the natural beauty

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9 The personnel in the newly reopened Department of Tourism included: the Chief Inspector of Tourism (level 6) with an annual salary of CLP\$ 24,000, two visiting inspectors (level 11) with annual salaries of CLP\$ 12,600, and a typist (level 16) with an annual salary of CLP \$ 8,400.

that exists within it” (*En Viaje*, September 1937, p. 50). The director saw the future of tourism as promising and thought that it could become “one of the most important sources of income,” especially because of Chile’s natural characteristics:

Effectively—as Domingo Oyarzun notes—while all the riches contained in our land will eventually be used up, the natural beauty and wonderful climate that we have are, in contrast, unchangeable. The changes these undergo are so infinitely slow that there is no fear that they will disappear. [In addition] the very progress of the communications media, which advance more every day, is of invaluable help. (*En Viaje*, September 1937, p. 50).

In this period, there were a series of milestones in the development of tourism, such as the role of the National Railway in promoting internal tourism and connecting major cities, with a flow of passengers that increased from 15 million in 1927 to 19 million in 1940 (República de Chile, 1940). In contrast, there were critical reviews by various media outlets as well as actors within the tourism industry that pointed out the lack of good and modern hotels. In response, the National Railway Company suggested that a Fund for Hotel Credit (Caja de Crédito Hotelero) be created to support the construction of hotels throughout the length of the country, given that:

[...] the hotel industry is perhaps the only one that does not have a place in the activities of these institutions. And if we consider that tourism can be a source of income for the country similar to many large industries, and that its development is closely linked to the improvement of hotels, then the importance of filling the gap that exists in the area of the credit for the latter is understandable. (*En Viaje*, April 1934, p. 21)

Such a financing policy was implemented through the Industrial Credit Law No. 5687 of 1935. Its Article No. 2 provided for support for hotel construction (República de Chile, 1935).

To understand the importance that tourism acquired within the state apparatus, it is necessary to look at the changes to the Chilean government’s tourism promotion policy. When the Department of Tourism reopened in 1932 it only had enough resources to pay its four employees at a cost of CLP\$ 57,600 annually, but after the Tourism Service was created in 1935 its budget grew progressively though without personnel increases. In 1935, an extraordinary budget of CLP\$ 1,314,765 was provided for improvements to tourist attractions, payment to individuals for carrying out specific tasks, the purchase of photographic and publicity materials, and subsidies for local

tourism committees, among other activities. Support was also provided to publish the proceedings of the First National Tourism Congress and for financing agencies in San Francisco (US) and Lima, and an office in Buenos Aires (*En Viaje*, February 1935, p. 46). Later, between 1936 and 1941, the last year in which the Department of Tourism was part of the Ministry of Development, regular budget items for the promotion of tourism were approved, which, on average, consisted of CLP\$ 3,000,000 annually.

The promotion of tourism was given a boost in the first half of the 1930s and especially after Chile's progressive economic recuperation. The National Railway's magazine *En Viaje* was first published in 1933, and its other magazine *Guía del Veraneante* first appeared in 1934. Pamphlets were published that showed an eclectic range of natural tourist attractions and cultural traditions (Palacios, 1939; Campo, 1939). Publicity targeted abroad was important, especially when it came to partnerships with US film producers. Two cases are representative of these combined efforts implemented to promote Chile in the United States. First in March 1935, two filmmakers from Fox Movietone News arrived to make two films about Chile:

[...] cinematographic films that will include the most varied cultural institutional, and emblematic, such as scenes from typical and rural life, with its music, melodies, and national dances, customs which will give life to the landscape and [provide] a better understanding of these interesting and modern materials for universal publicity. (*En Viaje*, March 1935, p. 25)<sup>10</sup>

The producers were given every facility to travel around the country, as well as tax exemptions. In the second case, a documentary producer, James A. FitzPatrick (Geiger, 2011), filmed a documentary entitled *Chile, tierra de encantos* as part of the Metro Goldwyn Mayer series *Travel Talks: The Voice of the Globe*.<sup>11</sup>

When Pedro Aguirre Cerda (1938-1941) became president and the Popular Front came into power, the policy of tourism promotion as a source of revenues for the Treasury through the targeting of foreign tourists

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10 The places shown by the Fox filmmakers included the major cities of Santiago, Valparaíso, and Viña del Mar, in addition to the main attractions in the south of Chile: the Malleco Viaduct, Temuco, Villarrica and Pucón, Valdivia, Osorno, Puerto Varas, La Ensenada, Río Petrohue, Lago de Todos los Santos, Peulla, Puerto Montt, Cochamó, the San Rafael Lagoon, and the Chiloé Archipelago.

11 The travelogue on Chile was registered in 1937 and included two cities and three southern regions of the country: Santiago, Valparaíso, the peasant area in the central part of Chile, the Araucanía region and Los Lagos. The documentary can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dw8Z8lbhbKo>

was, in the main, continued. One magazine noted that the Minister of Development, Arturo Bianchi, “proposes to promote tourism in Chile by all means possible until it is—just like in other countries—the source of considerable revenue for the country and of significant national progress” (*El Turismo en Chile*, 1939, p. 5). Though the nascent tourism policy of the Ministry of Development followed that of the previous government of Arturo Alessandri, starting with the Aguirre Cerda presidency, social and cultural dimensions were incorporated into tourism promotion. In addition, various historical studies point to the promotion of consumer-oriented policies in this period, including in the area of tourism. There was also strong interest in encouraging the Chilean population and particularly workers to see the country as a way of promoting national values (Silva & Henríquez, 2017; Silva, 2018).

The victory of the Popular Front in 1938 led to a drive to promote leisure time and social tourism (Yáñez, 2016). The idea of traveling and getting to know the country as a form of promoting national values had been around for a long time and was strengthened during the presidency of Pedro Aguirre Cerda. In *En Viaje* magazine, an editorial entitled “Getting to Know the Country,” is revealing:

In another sense—and as we have said before—to know the country is to know its national history, to understand the essential characteristics of the race, to understand and feel the capacity of the nation. All this, together with the relaxation that journeys provide, makes tourism doubly beneficial and useful for the country. Thus, we believe that vacations are a time to become immersed in the nation, to get to know its natural beauties, to learn about the possibilities that our territory offers, and to make them an element of fruitful initiatives. (*En Viaje*, February 1938, p. 1)

The National Railways aided this task by promoting trips by workers and partnerships with some hotels in the south of the country (*En Viaje*, November 1940, p. 9). In this context, greater resources were provided to the Department of Cultural Extension, a dependency of the Ministry of Labor responsible for promoting cultural entertainment activities for workers after the workday. In addition, in 1939, the National Institution for the Defense of the Race and Utilization of Free Time (Institución Nacional de Defensa de la Raza y de Aprovechamiento de las Horas Libres) was created. It organized sport, cultural, and social activities aimed at occupying the free time of workers and their families, as well as organizing walking tours (Yáñez, 2016, p. 622).



Through the Organic Decree of January 28, 1939, the Tourism Service's name was changed to the Office of Tourism Services, but it kept its preexisting powers and obligations. The reason for this change was that "the growth of tourism in Chile in recent years has made it clear that it is necessary to give greater importance to the official body charged with the promotion, development, and oversight of the provisions in Law 4585" (DIC, 1943, p. 128). It was decided that the Office was to have three sections: inspection, promotion, and information. The biggest innovation in comparison to previous tourism entities were its duties in the area of information, which included obtaining and cataloguing foreign publications on tourism, collecting information about group tours to Chile, and setting up a statistical register of tourist movements.

In 1940, one more step was taken to consolidate this first stage of the tourism policy that is studied here and that was the creation of the National Council on Tourism. This entity was originally proposed in 1929 by the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo in order to reinforce the provisions of the Law of Tourism, and in particular the powers of the executive to expropriate zones that were considered to have tourism potential and to take out loans to promote their development (Cámara de Diputados, 30 de julio de 1929). The National Council for Tourism was composed of a president—appointed by the President of the Republic—the Director of Tourism, the Director or a delegate from the Department of Commerce of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the Director of the Department of Railways of the Ministry of Development, the Director of the Department of Land and Colonization, the Inspector General of Roads, two advisors chosen by the President, and representatives of associations in the tourist sector. Its responsibilities included advising the government, proposing the construction of hotels, developing promotional materials on tourist destinations domestically and abroad, and organizing vacations for employees and workers. While the Nacional Council of Tourism tried to get off the ground in the mid-1930s, it was only in April 1940 that it was formally created through Decree No. 801 of the Ministry of Development (Muñoz, 1942). To enhance its activities and its financial autonomy vis-à-vis other government bodies, the Council had the authority to take out loans, for which the Tourism Fund was created. The Organic Degree of the Council dated April 17, 1940, established that this fund would receive funds through the Budgetary Law, a one-time contribution of CLP\$ 3,500,000 from the Corporation of Development and Reconstruction, an annual contribution of no less than CLP\$ 600,000 from the National Railways, private donations, and the income of the Council (DIC, 1943, p. 168).

The first stage in the promotion and development of tourism in Chile ended in August 1942 through an administrative reform carried out by the government of Juan Antonio Ríos (1942-1946). Decree Law No. 6-4187 (August 1942) of the Ministry of the Interior restructured the various administrative services of the state. All former government entities related to tourism, recreation, and free time—including the Tourism Service of the Ministry of Development, the Department of Cultural Extension of the Ministry of Labor, and the National Institution for the Defense of the Race and Utilization of Free Time—were combined into the General Office for Information and Culture within the Ministry of the Interior. This office also included the Department of Municipalities, the Superior Office of the National Theater, the Council on Film Censorship, the Administration of Cerro San Cristóbal, and the Metropolitan Zoo.

### **Conclusions**

The approval of the Promotion of Tourism Law No. 4585 in 1929, which included the creation of the Department of Tourism, marked the beginning of a state role in tourism development and promotion in Chile. The main objective of the present article was to analyze this first stage in formulating tourism policies with emphasis on the evolution of the Department of Tourism. The progressive growth of its personnel, which reached its height of 31 employees in 1931, and the expansion of its powers during the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo demonstrate the importance assigned to tourism as an economic activity and a source of income for Chile.

The first stage of the Department of Tourism was affected by the limitations of the tourism industry itself and a scarcity of resources. This, together with the 1929 crisis and the Great Depression that followed, led the government to close the department in 1931. However, given the need to collect tourism taxes, its reopening was decreed in 1932, though with a staff of only four.

During the Arturo Alessandri administration (1932–1938), government officials continued to promote leisure activities and the use of free time, though this was carried out through various ministries and without any centralized coordination. Thus, starting in 1932 there was a Department of Cultural Extension under the Ministry of Labor, whose goal was to promote recreational and cultural activities for workers and, in 1939 the National Institution for the Defense of the Race and Utilization of Free Time was created.

In the mid-1930s, there were signs of a certain upturn in tourism promotion and development activities. The consolidation of the National Railways

led to the publication of two important tourism magazines: *En Viaje* and *Guía del Veraneante*, in addition to promotional pamphlets and films that were shown to the public in the US. In addition, there were important initiatives to build hotels throughout the country. With the creation of the Tourism Service in 1935, there was a new impetus to develop tourism, which was considered a key activity in the promotion of economic growth.

During the government of Pedro Aguirre Cerda, tourism promotion policies continued under the assumption that it was an economic activity that assured the inflow of foreign currency to Chile. The emphasis was on the social aspects of tourism, incentivized by different programs within the country, as part of a national imperative for the population to get to know their own country.

The General Office for Information and Culture was created in 1942 and integrated the functions of the Department of Cultural Extension, the National Institution for the Defense of the Race and Utilization of Free Time, the Administration of Parks of the Ministry of Public Works, and the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Development. The office was responsible for presenting communications to the government, promoting the image of the country, as well as organizing a set of recreational and cultural activities for workers.

In conclusion, tourism policies implemented during the period under study contributed to creating a new entity within the state that was responsible for creating the first strategies for the promotion and regulation of tourism in Chile. The policies were effective in constructing an image of the country and promoting it among both foreign and national tourists. For reasons of space and the focus of this study, it was not possible to explore other actors that helped to strengthen tourism policies, such as municipalities and business associations. Nevertheless, we hope that this article will open new perspectives for further investigations, especially in two regards: first, an in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness and reach of these first tourism policies designed by the state; and secondly, an investigation of how public servants and government entities charged with the promotion of tourism related to actors who viewed this activity from a more local perspective, such as municipalities and entrepreneurs.

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