

in 1869, the old Third Military District of Mexico State became the independent state of Morelos. State jobs naturally went to local veterans of the war, and Alarcón, who had taken part in the sieges of Cuernavaca and Mexico City, got an appointment as head of the rurales, mounted federal police, in Yau-tepec and Tetecala districts.⁶ The highwaymen and bandits who swarmed over Morelos at that time soon found it easier to do business elsewhere than in his zone.⁷ A military Republican when civilian Republicans were looked on as jaded schemers, Alarcón disapproved of Juárez's successor, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, "a Mexican version of Lord Chesterfield."⁸ When Díaz, his former army boss, revolted in 1876 against President Lerdo, Alarcón, still a district police chief, bolted to his side and was commissioned to operate in Morelos, Guerrero, and Mexico State. Díaz's revolt triumphed, and a year later the new Porfirista governor in Morelos rewarded Alarcón with a promotion to state chief of rurales. This governor afterward enjoyed the reputation of having wiped out brigandage in the state; actually he only presided while Alarcón and his local officers did the work of running down the outlaws, shooting them on the spot, and slowly, season by season, returning the districts to order.

Porfirian Mexico prized tough policemen, and Alarcón's talents soon won him other posts. By 1883 he was a jefe político.⁹ By 1884 he was elected to the state legislature, serving at the same time as lieutenant governor.¹ And he kept his job as state police chief. Despite his poor health, he visited all of Morelos's twenty-six municipalities, acquainted himself with the local notables, and cultivated their support.² During the late 1880's and early 1890's he emerged as the strongest politician in the state, and when the current governor died halfway through his term in 1894, Alarcón took over for the interim without hesitation or trouble, had himself elected in his own right two years later, and began a stern but benevolent rule that ended only with his death.³

⁶ Ireneo Paz: *México actual. Galería de contemporáneos* (México, 1898), p. 43.

⁷ J. Figueroa Doménech: *Guía general descriptiva de la República mexicana. Historia, geografía, estadística, etc., etc.*, 2 vols. (México, 1899), II, 370.

⁸ The phrase comes from Frank A. Knapp, Jr.: *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, 1823-1889. A Study of Influence and Obscurity* (Austin, 1951), p. 154.

⁹ Cuautla district was his. Paz: op. cit., p. 43.

¹ *Periódico Oficial*, XVI, 61, 1; 57, 3.

² See Cecilio A. Robelo: *Revistas Descriptivas del Estado de Morelos* (Cuernavaca, 1885), *passim*.

³ *El Orden. Periódico Oficial del Estado de Morelos*, X, 49, 2-3; 50, 2. *Semanario Oficial*, II, 33, 1.