A Study of the Significant Relationships Between the United States and Puerto Rico Since 1898

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A STUDY OF THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND PUERTO RICO
SINCE 1898

By
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Requirements for the Degree of Master
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CHAPTER I
PUERTO RICO: OUR LATIN-AMERICAN POSSESSION

A study of the conditions and influences of any people must necessarily be prefaced by an understanding of their geographical, historical, and social background.

The West Indies are hardly more than a name to most of the people of the United States. They constitute a group of islands between North and South America, separating the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico from the Atlantic Ocean. The Antilles, which the West Indies are often called, extend over an area of 2,000 miles from east to west and more than 1,000 miles from north to south.

Commenting on our attitude towards the West Indies Leo S. Rowe states that:

Our commercial relations with the islands have been relatively unimportant, and we have remained indifferent to the problems of government which they have presented. ... In recent years, it is true, the fortunes of Cuba have aroused the sympathies of the American people, but as to the condition and nationality of the other islands they have shown little interest or concern. Nor has the slightest attention been given to the industrial revolution through which the West Indies have passed, and which has left its mark on their social and political status. In fact, since the disappearance of the temptation to acquire additional territory in the Caribbean for the purpose of extending slavery these islands have not been a factor in the
public policy of the United States. To the historian, however, they have been of continuous interest. In the West Indies have centered the struggles of the European powers for a foothold in America, the great naval conflicts which these struggles engendered, the daring exploits of the buccaneers, and cruelties and barbarities of the slave trade. ... Prized for their resources, and even more because of their strategic position, no sacrifice seemed too great in order to secure them.¹

Since the dawn of the present century the dominance of the United States in the West Indies has increased noticeably. The closing of the Spanish War, with the independence of Cuba, and the cession of Puerto Rico, inaugurated a period of increased interest "on the part of our government in affairs West Indian, and in the West Indies a new interest in everything American."²

The latest of the 'great powers' to acquire possessions in the West Indies has been the United States. For although this country refused to make permanent its military occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, it did adopt Spain's last remaining colony in the Western Hemisphere as a by-product of the war for the liberation of Cuba. Puerto Rico was made a territory of the United States at the conclusion of that war, and so has become the only truly Latin-American possession of the 'colossus of the north.'³

Puerto Rico is an island of the United States. It is the most easterly of the Greater Antilles, situated between 17° 51' 2 Leo S. Rowe. The United States and Porto Rico. Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1904, 1-2.
and 18° 30' north, and 65° 30' and 67° 15' west. Its boundaries are: on the north, the Atlantic Ocean; on the south, the Caribbean Sea; and the east, the Virgin Passage; and on the west, the Mona Passage. It is situated about 70 miles east of the Island of Haiti, about 40 miles west of the Virgin Islands, and about 1,400 miles southeast of New York City. Its approximate area is 3,435 square miles, having a length of about 100 miles and a width of from 35 to 40 miles.4

The climate of Puerto Rico is tropical; but since it is slightly modified by the Gulf Stream, the days are never cold and seldom hot. The easterly trade winds prevail throughout the year and the breeze is constantly from the Atlantic Ocean.

Knowlton Mixer describes the island in the following manner:

The aspect of the island is hilly rather than mountainous, three-quarters of the surface being broken and irregular. Two chains cross the island west to east, a little south of the center, rising at the highest point to some 4,000 feet above sea level and terminating in the conspicuous peak of El Yunque, 3,750 feet at the eastern end. These ranges form the watershed and differentiate the climate of the south side from the north. The principal range, which extends from Rincon in the southwest to Fajardo at the eastern end, is known as Sierra de Luquillo. The subsidiary range, called Sierra de Cayey, is crossed by the Military Road at Aibonito at an altitude of 2,000 feet. Generally mountainous character of the country is shown by the fact that many roads in the interior rise as high as 2,200 feet above the sea level.5

4 Encyclopedia Britannica, XVIII, 261.
5 Mixer, 5-6.
Physically and socially Puerto Rico is a country of contrasts. There are plains, valleys, hills and mountains on the island. There are areas where it rains almost every day and areas of desert-like aridity. The island is a strange blend of the medieval with the modern. Some of the natives live in huts of thatched roofs, but the more fortunate Puerto Ricans dwell in modern apartments. Giant tractors and ox teams plow adjacent fields of cane. At night candle light and electric bulbs glow in houses separated by not more than a stone's throw. Planes fly between the island and the mainland within eight hours, yet the people are forced to live an insular life.

Puerto Rico, which is most deserving of a bright future, has one of the oldest civilizations in America. In his account of the discovery of this island W. A. Jones says:

On November 16, 1493, on his second voyage, the mountain El Yunque, on the northeast coast of the island then known as Boriquen, was seen by Columbus, whose fleet anchored in the port near Aguadilla. A monument erected in the fourth century of the discovery marks the site between Aguada and Aguadilla, where presumably the admiral took possession of the newly discovered territory in the name of his sovereign. The island was named San Juan - in honor of Saint John the Baptist.

In 1493 Juan Ponce de Leon sailed to Hispaniola (Santo Domingo) with Columbus on the latter's second voyage, an ex-

pedition which included many aristocratic young men and adventur­ous noblemen who had been left without occupation after the fall of Granada.

Fifteen years later Ventura Fuentes gave the following ac­count of Ponce de Leon's adventure:

When Nicolas Ovando came to Hispaniola in 1502 as governor, he found the natives in a state of revolt, and in the war which fol­lowed Ponce rendered such valuable services that he was appointed Ovando's lieutenant with headquarters in a town in the eastern part of the island. While here, he heard from the Indians that there was much wealth in the neighboring island of Boriquen (Porto Rico) and he asked and obtained permission to visit it in 1508, where he discovered many rich treasures; for his work in this expedi­tion he was appointed Adelantado or Governor of Boriquen. Having reduced the natives, he was soon afterwards removed from office, but not until he had amassed a considerable for­tune. At this time stories of Eastern Asia were prevalent which told of a famous spring the waters of which had the marvelous virtue of restoring youth to those who drank them. Probably the Spaniard heard from the Indians tales that reminded him of this Fons Juven­tutis, and he got the idea that this fountain was situated on an island called Bimini which lay to the north of Hispaniola.

Ponce obtained from Charles V, on Febru­ary 23, 1512, a patent authorizing him to dis­cover and people the island of Bimini, giving him jurisdiction over the island for life, and bestowing upon him the title of Adelantado. On March 3, 1513 Ponce set out from San German, Porto Rico, with three ships, fitted out at his own expense. Setting his course in a north­westerly direction, eleven days later he reached Guanahani, where Columbus first saw land. Con­tinuing on his way on Easter Sunday (Pascua de Flores), March 27, 1513, he came within sight of the coast which he named Florida in honor of
the day and on account of the luxuriant vegetation. On April 2, he landed at a spot a little to the north of the present site of St. Augustine and formally took possession in the name of the crown. ... He then returned to Porto Rico. During this trip he had several encounters with the natives, who showed great courage and determination in their attacks, which probably accounts for the fact that Ponce did not attempt to found a settlement or penetrate into the interior in search of the treasure which was believed to be hidden there. ... Through his friend, Pedro Nunez de Guzman, he secured a second grant dated September 27, 1514, which gave him power to settle the Island of Dimini, and the Island of Florida, for such he thought Florida to be. In 1521 he set out with two ships and landing upon Florida coast, just where, it is not known, he was furiously attacked by the natives, while he was building houses for his settlers. Finally driven to reembark, he set sail for Cuba, where he died of the wounds which he had received. 8

In the final days of the Spanish-American War General Miles left Cuba for Puerto Rico. Haste was required, however, for on July 13, three days before the expedition sailed, the Spanish governor had opened negotiations for peace. Swiftly following up the collapse of Santiago, General Miles, general-in-chief of the army, sailed on July 21, 1898 with part of the army corps from Santiago nine days after the surrender. General Miles, in command of the Gloucester, and accompanied by Major-General James H. Wilson was reinforced later by troops from Newport News under Major-General John R. Brooks. No opportunity was to be permitted for Spain to recover from the shock of her losses.

8 Ventura Fuentes. The Catholic Encyclopedia, XII, 228.
General Miles landed at Guanica July 25 and was welcomed by the Puerto Ricans who had refused to aid the Spanish soldiers in their weak defenses. He assured the people that he had come to defend them and made this proclamation:

'The people of the U. S. bring you the fostering arm of a nation of free people, whose greatest power is in justice and humanity to all those living within its fold, to bring you protection, not only to yourselfs, but to your property, to promote your prosperity, and to bestow upon you the immunities and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government.'

On July 27 the Wasp, the Annapolis, and the Dixie left Guanica Bay for Ponce expecting to shell the city. The Wasp was first to arrive at their destination, where an immense crowd of citizens had gathered on the shore. The gunners of the Wasp stood ready to fire at an instant's warning when Ensign Rowland Curtin, with four men, was sent ashore bearing the flag of truce. The Americans were overwhelmed with gifts from the Puerto Ricans.

Soon after the Dixie arrived, its commander, C. H. Davis, was rowed ashore where a note was handed him from Colonel San Martin asking for terms. The reply was that the surrender must be unconditional; however, at the request of the commandant the terms were modified somewhat.

Late in July the Spanish government, largely through the advice and protestation of Spanish merchants, began to realize

its hopeless situation. On the grounds of humanity and business it was imperative from the Spanish point of view that hostilities cease. On July 26 Spain opened negotiations through M. Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at Washington. After long and careful consideration with his cabinet, President William McKinley transmitted to Madrid, through M. Cambon, the terms upon which peace would be accepted. On August 10 a protocol formally suspending hostilities was drawn up in the capital and two days later was signed by Secretary Day and M. Cambon.

The next step was to work on the treaty of peace. President McKinley chose the American delegates with diplomatic care as can be gleaned from the following quotation from a history of our nation by John D. Hicks:

On October 1, 1898 commissioners from the United States and Spain met at Paris to work out the details of the treaty of peace. To head the American delegation, McKinley chose his Secretary of State, William R. Day, but even Day was required to resign his post as secretary before he left the country. Mindful of the fact that a treaty must be ratified by the United States Senate, McKinley sent along three prominent senators, two Republicans and a Democrat - Cushman K. Davis of Minnesota, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, William P. Frye of Maine, president pro tempore of the Senate, and George Gray of Delaware. None of them was expected to resign as senator, and none of them did so. The fifth place on the commission went to a newspaper man, Whitelaw Reid, Republican editor of the New York Tribune.10

The Treaty of Paris was signed on December 10, 1898, and President McKinley transmitted it to the Senate January 4, 1899, where it was read in executive session and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The committee reported it favorably January 11, and after long and exhaustive discussion in the Senate it was ratified on February 6, 1899 by a vote of sixty-one to twenty-nine. Queen Maria Christina, Regent of Spain, signed the treaty in the name of her son, Alfonso XIII, on March 17, 1899.

The official end of the war between Spain and the United States was reached on Tuesday, April 11, 1899, when ratifications of the Treaty of Paris were exchanged in President McKinley's office at the White House, Secretary Hay acting for the United States and M. Jules Cambon of France for Spain. At the close of the proceedings the President signed the proclamation announcing to the world the termination of the Spanish-American War:

Spain cedes to the United States the Island of Porto Rico and the civil rights and the political status of the natives shall be determined by Congress.\textsuperscript{11}

The results of this war briefly summed up are: The United States emerged from the Spanish-American War a world power with island possessions in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. We spent $200,000,000 in the prosecution of the conflict and the

issue of war bonds strengthened the position of the national banks. All things considered, the toll of life that the war had taken was not so heavy. The total deaths from all causes were 2,926; the wounded were 1,645. Those who died from diseases made up nine-tenths of the fatalities.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1897 there were 953,243 people living in Puerto Rico. This was equivalent to about nine-tenths of the population of Maryland in 1890, although the natives were crowded into an area no larger than the coast of Maryland. In 1928 the population was 1,454,000, an increase of 53 per cent. This rapid growth is a combined result of an increased birth rate and a decreased death rate.

Of the total population in 1897, 61.8 per cent were white and 38.2 per cent were colored. Under "colored" are included the negroes and all of mixed blood.\textsuperscript{13} Another interesting factor concerning the racial composition of the Puerto Rican colored population is the surprisingly small percentage of persons of pure negro blood.\textsuperscript{14} According to the census of 1920, approximately 73 per cent of the population were white and 27 per cent colored, but this is hardly more than a statistical guess.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Rowe, 99.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 101.
In his report on the attitude of the Puerto Ricans towards the American Army of Occupation Henry K. Carroll, Special Commissioner, made the following statement:

All classes of natives of the island welcomed the American army, American occupations, and American methods, and accepted without hesitation the Stars and Stripes in place of the red and yellow bars. They had not been disloyal to the old flag; but it had come to represent to them, particularly during the present century in which a class feeling developed between the insular and the peninsular Spaniard, partiality and oppression. In the short war, some of the natives occupying official positions made demonstrations of loyalty to the Crown of Spain, as was perfectly natural, but they were among the first to submit to American rule when the protocol promised cession of the island to the United States. ... 16

The United States Insular Commission reported the following information which corresponds with that of Mr. Carroll:

Upon all occasions at all times we were met by the best and most influential citizens, were received with the greatest kindness by all parties. ... The people of Puerto Rico are most loyal in their devotion to their new country. ... They are asking that the spirit of laws and institutions be given them, and at the same time they are asking that they be relieved of the oppressive laws which they have been subjected to so long by Spanish rule. 17

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The idea that the natives were starving to death in 1899 was corrected by the Insular Commission in this report:

There is no starvation upon the island ... for the simple reason that the people live so frugally and are contented with so little, while the soil and the climate are so productive of many of the simple necessaries of life that it would be almost impossible to starve a people who live upon tropical fruits and tropical vegetables. ... After a complete survey of the island we can state unhesitatingly that no such starvation exists, nor is it at all likely to exist in Puerto Rico.18

George W. Davis in his report before the Senate Committee stated facts relating to education in the island. He said:

The educated class of Puerto Ricans are as well educated and accomplished as the educated men of any country. They have had the benefit of a liberal education, a few in the United States, a good many in France, and a great many in Madrid and Habana, where they have passed through the universities. ... The schools in Puerto Rico were few in number. The amount allotted for education by the insular budget was something like 300,000 pesos a year. ... The teachers were officers of the government, holding life positions and receiving pensions superannuated.19

The marriage rate in Puerto Rico was very low before the American occupation. In 1888 it was only 4 per thousand, and in 1898, 2.9 per thousand, though we find as far back as 1824, a rate of 7.1 per thousand. In 1924 it was 14.1, and in 1928,

18 Ibid., 50.
19 George W. Davis. Testimony before the Senate Committee. (Cited from New Larned History, 6840).
15.5. This change has been brought about by the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, who have, since devoting more attention to their rural charges, exercised their influence in persuading the country people to marry legally instead of consensually. Relevant to the marriage rate Victor Clark makes the following statement:

Though the percentage of consensually married has steadily decreased in American occupation, the number of people so married, and the technically illegitimate children born to them is appalling. The commissioner of health reported in 1928 to have found the illegitimate children as compared with the number of legitimate to be as high as 47.9 per cent in Santa Isabel, the median for the island being between Carolina with 18.5 per cent and Rio Piedras with 17.9 per cent.20

That conditions in this respect are still deplorable is evidenced by the following extracts from letters received from a Dominican missionary priest laboring among the Puerto Ricans:

About marriage: Half of the Catholics do not live as they should - civil, or Protestant marriage, or not marriage at all.21

Many people do not live according to the law because they have no religion and think that concubinage is the same as matrimony. Others do not marry because they know that once married they cannot divorce.22

Spain released her sovereignty in the New World on Tuesday, October 18, 1898. Governor-General Macias left his palace on

20 Clark, 571.
22 Maas. Letter, April 12, 1945. See Appendix.
October 16 with every possible honor shown him. He boarded the Spanish steamer which was provided to carry him to the mother country. General Richard Ortega acted as temporary governor until October 23.

In his account of the occupation of Puerto Rico by the Americans William Dinwiddie describes the American sentiment thus:

Our attitude was not that of a dictator but of the protector. No bombastic speeches were made to wound the still sensitive Spanish pride, no great military pomp caused the teeth of a vanquished enemy to grind in hidden rage; we raised our flag softly, proudly, if you like, but we raised it with an outstretched hand of friendship.23

CHAPTER II
GOVERNMENT IN PUERTO RICO

It is interesting to note that both treaties which mark the turning points in the domestic and foreign policy of the United States should have been negotiated in Paris. Yet, the territory acquired in 1899 compares neither in value nor in area with that acquired in 1803. ¹

Spain ceded the island of Puerto Rico to the United States and the people were deemed to be citizens of Puerto Rico unless they declared their allegiance to Spain. Article IX of the Treaty states these conditions very clearly:

Spanish subjects, natives of the peninsula, dwelling in the territory whose sovereignty Spain renounces or cedes in the present treaty, may remain in said territory or leave it, ... In case they remain in the territory they may preserve their Spanish nationality by making in a registry office, within a year after the interchange of the ratifications of this treaty, a declaration of their intention to preserve said nationality.²

The transfer to the United States brought about many changes in Puerto Rico. According to Preston James some of these were anything but commendable:

1 Rowe, 20.
Far from showing the way to stabilized economy, the United States has provided an unhappy example of commercial exploitation of land and labor by absentee owners. People in the United States need assume no air of superiority when they speak critically of the lootings of the resources of a continent by the Spaniards and the Portuguese, or when they observe the 'backwardness' of the present Latin-American countries. If the people of the United States wish to know why Latin Americans are not eager to share the material benefits of North American commercial enterprises, they need only examine the plight of Puerto Rico.5

The period of adjustment to the new conditions was not an easy one for the natives of the island, nor were the problems before the military governors simple of solution. The main purpose for which military rule was established in Puerto Rico was to police the island, improve sanitation, reorganize the judicial system, and to introduce financial reforms. Order was restored in the island and the people were taught to respect the law. American influence prevailed in a marked degree.

During the first six months of American control more than 750,000 Puerto Ricans were vaccinated and smallpox was practically stamped out. Steps were taken to isolate lepers. The organization of the courts and improvement of procedure were the most difficult problems, as is substantiated by Governor George W. Davis in the following statement:

The system of laws that prevailed here is the outgrowth of quite a thousand years of

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3 James, 776-777.
human experience, and cannot be struck down or radically changed in a day nor yet in a year. 4

The military government under General Brooke proceeded at once to substitute the fundamentals of liberty and of democracy as recognized in the United States for what remained of the outworn sovereignty of Spain.

A postal system was begun and the government lottery was abolished; freedom of speech and of the press were restored; and a police force of Puerto Ricans under American officers was established. Pending the restoration of normal conditions mortgages were suspended. United States currency was substituted for Spanish currency, and free public schools were opened for the percentage of illiteracy among the Puerto Ricans was very high. General George W. Davis describes the existing conditions as follows:

Nearly 800,000 of the 960,000 population could neither read nor write. Most of these lived in bark huts and were in effect the personal property of land proprietors. They were poor beyond possibility of our understanding and if they were so fortunate as to have enough for the current hour they were content. 5

Hardly had General Davis taken office when the devastating hurricane of August 7, 1899 took place. This, too, added much to the poverty and distress of the natives. Governor Davis

5 Mixer, 67.
reports in his own words the great disaster:

On the morning of the 7th of August, 1899, the United States Weather Bureau, through its branches here, announced the approach of a cyclonic disturbance and the danger signal was hoisted at substations of the Bureau of Ponce and Mayaguez. ... The gale struck the island at Humacao about midnight, August 7. ... The full reports of the loss of life bring the number of deaths up to 2,700 ... the material damage was almost beyond belief. But the greatest loss of life resulted, not from the wind, but from the terrible downfall of rain that immediately followed; ... added to the horror of the situation there came with the gale on the southern coast a tidal wave which submerged large areas. 6

The government of the United States promptly came to the assistance of the starving population, and something like 32,000,000 rations were distributed by the army during the ten months succeeding the hurricane. Taxes were not collected because of the tremendous losses the people had suffered. The War Department spent the sum of $950,000 repairing roads, which gave employment to the men in need of relief.

The governors did not interfere with the existing laws whenever they could avoid doing so. The Americans lacked knowledge of the methods of administration of the local laws and were not conversant with the manners and mode of life by which they were surrounded. General Davis verified this in stating that:

6 New Larned History, 6841.
At the time of my arrival not a page of the voluminous laws of the island of Spanish origin had been translated into English. These laws, upon which the whole fabric of society was based, were as a sealed book and had been so to my predecessors.7

There was great danger in the transition from the old regime of the Spanish to that of American rule. The idea seemed to prevail in Puerto Rico that the United States granted "unrestrained individual action and that the Federal Government extended a fatherly care over the citizens, assuring them of a living and a certain minimum of subsistence."8

For about two years following the cession of the island to the United States, Puerto Rico was under the jurisdiction of American military governors. The first provision, called the Foraker Act, providing for civil government of the island, was passed by Congress in 1900, and this law, with slight amendments, was in force until 1917.

As established by the Foraker Act, the government included a governor appointed by the President of the United States for a term of four years. He received the powers conferred upon governors of organized territories, such as to grant reprieves and pardons, appoint certain officials, veto laws, and see that the laws were executed.9 The official title of the chief exec-

8 Rowe, 64.
9 Stuart, 250.
utive was to be "The Governor of Puerto Rico." Annually and at such other times as might be deemed necessary, he was to make an official report, through the Secretary of State, to the President of the United States.\(^\text{10}\)

The Puerto Ricans grew restless under the military rule and had this form of government lasted much longer that it did, there would have been danger of the natives displaying less good will in supporting the plan.

The principal reason why civil government had not been established sooner was the fear on the part of Congress that, on this basis, legislation in regard to the insular possessions might be subject to the restrictions of the Constitution. To avoid misunderstandings on this point, the Foraker Act provided that the natives should be deemed as citizens of Puerto Rico instead of the United States, and tariff duties of 15 per cent of the Dingley Tariff were placed upon goods imported into the United States from Puerto Rico, which was possible if the island were to be considered foreign territory.\(^\text{11}\)

There was some uncertainty as to whether the island of Puerto Rico was to be considered as "foreign" territory, but in the insular cases, particularly that of Downs vs. Bidwell (182 U. S. 244), it was determined that Puerto Rico was not a part of the United States and was, therefore, not affected by the

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\(^{10\text{ Foraker Act, No. 17. See Appendix.}}\)

\(^{11\text{ Stuart, 250.}}\)
constitutional provision that "all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States." (Article 1, Section 8). The court's ruling is often summarized by the clause, "The Constitution does not follow the flag."\(^\text{12}\)

Under the act to establish civil government in Puerto Rico, Honorable Charles H. Allen, formerly a representative in Congress from Massachusetts, and later Assistant-Secretary of the Navy, was appointed to the governorship of the island; J. H. Hollander of Maryland was appointed treasurer; and John R. Garrison of the District of Columbia, auditor. Governor Allen was inducted into office with considerable ceremony at San Juan on May 1, 1900.\(^\text{13}\)

At the completion of his first year's rule in Puerto Rico Governor Allen made the following report:

I feel as the result of one year's close study on the spot, of all the conditions surrounding the problem, that Congress went quite as far as it could safely venture in the form of government already existing in the island, and as the result of such experience and observation, I fully believe that with good men devoted to the work of the island it will develop faster under such form. ... I go a step farther to say that intelligent Americans fully acquainted with the situation, without regard to political affiliations, if interrogated, would stand as one man on the proposition that Congress had gone as far in the present form of government as it possibly could until experience and training have produced

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 250.
\(^{13}\) New Larned History, 6843.
their results in a fuller knowledge of the duties to responsibilities of civil government on the part of the inhabitants. 14

That the Puerto Ricans were not satisfied with the system of government can be gleaned from the successive reports of the governors. In the third annual report for 1902-03, Governor William Hunt declared that "the majority of all the people want territorial government, but in his opinion a change in the government at that time would be a mistake." 15

One complaint of the Puerto Ricans was based on the uncertainty of their status as citizens. Governor Winthrop in 1905 made it clear that a spirit of unrest and discontent was growing among the people. Under Spanish rule they were classed as citizens of Spain and it was naturally difficult to understand why they were denied citizenship by the government of the United States. The governor urged Congress to grant citizenship on the ground that it would greatly improve the feeling of loyalty to the United States, and would instill in them a healthy feeling of patriotism as being citizens of the country and not merely citizens of the dependency of the country. 16

Almost from the beginning of the island's administration under the Foraker Act a marked antagonism was manifested on the part of the House of Delegates toward the Executive Council.

15 Stuart, 252.
16 Ibid., 263.
In 1909 the situation came to a head. The Lower House refused to vote the appropriation bills for the ensuing year unless the Upper House would accept certain measures which were radical in their scope. The Executive Council refused to adopt the measures and the session terminated without the appropriation measures being passed. A second session was called and resulted in another deadlock. The governor called Washington and President Taft laid the matter before Congress. He recommended an amendment to the Foraker Act providing that when the assembly should adjourn without having made the necessary appropriations, sums equal to the appropriations of the previous year should be available from the current revenues.

Congress took up the subject and the so-called Olmsted Amendment was passed, which provided that:

If at the termination of any fiscal year the appropriations necessary for the support of the government for the ensuing year have not been made, an amount equal to the sums appropriated in the last appropriation bills for such purposes shall be deemed to be appropriated.\(^\text{17}\)

President Taft directed Mr. Dickinson, the Secretary of War, to visit the island and make an investigation of affairs there. It was made very clear that the Puerto Ricans were unanimous on two issues; namely, citizenship and the organization of the Upper House.

\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 254.
On the first issue the natives demanded that citizenship be granted collectively; but Mr. Dickinson was of the opinion that such a move would be unwise, as many of the people were of Spanish descent and did not want to become citizens. On the second issue he recommended that a senate be created to consist of thirteen members, all citizens of Puerto Rico or of the United States and resident of Puerto Rico for not less than one year. He suggested that eight members be appointed by the President and the remainder by the Puerto Ricans. In conclusion Mr. Dickinson reported that on the whole the Puerto Ricans had an excellent government and that the United States could look with just pride upon the administration of affairs on the island.18

A bill was introduced in Congress on insular affairs by Mr. Olmsted. The bill was passed by the Lower House but it was not satisfactory to the Puerto Ricans. In a message to Congress dated February 23, 1910, the House of Delegates protested against its passage on the ground that it curtailed their liberties granted by the Foraker Act, and the Olmsted Bill never became a law.19

In 1917 Congress passed the Jones Act, which gave Puerto Ricans full rights as citizens of the United States, though such citizenship was not obligatory; and an unusually large

18 Ibid., 255.
19 Ibid., 256.
share in the responsibility of the government. The former appointive executive council was replaced by a senate composed of nineteen members chosen by ballot by the Puerto Ricans. A house of representatives of thirty-nine members is also elected by the people. The governor, who is appointed by the President, has the power to appoint the heads of the following executive departments: commissioners of the interior, agriculture and commerce, labor, health, and the treasurer; but the President appoints the attorney-general and the commissioners of education. A resident commissioner represents the island in the House of Representatives in Washington. He is elected by the people for a term of four years, and has a voice, but no vote, in the House. In 1934 the jurisdiction of the island was changed from the War Department to the Department of the Interior.20

Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, but they may vote in the presidential elections only when they are living on the mainland. Puerto Rico has been held by the United States Court to be an incorporated territory of the United States, a status differing from that of those territories which have been incorporated into the union.21

The new government went into effect promptly, and in his

report for 1917, Governor Arthur Yager declared that the measure was received everywhere with satisfaction. Under the provision for the renunciation for citizenship, only 290 in the whole island made application, while more than 800 persons born in Puerto Rico of alien parents made a voluntary declaration of allegiance, thus accepting American citizenship. 22

The report given to the Secretary of War by the Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs showing progress made in the island reads thus:

For the third successive year notable progress, commercial and industrial, is reported from Puerto Rico. In his annual report ending June 30, 1912, Governor Colton states:

'The advance during the year has been more generally marked, and more important than that of any previous twelve months in the history of the island, either before or since American occupation. Sugar continued in the first place as an article of export; the quantity reaching 367,000 tons during the year, five times 1901. The number of cigars manufactured was fourteen times 1901. The United States purchased Puerto Rican products to the value of $42,873,401, while Puerto Rico imports from the home markets reached $37,424,545.' 23

Governor Colton retired in 1913 and was succeeded by Governor Yager, who held office for eight years during the administration of President Wilson. One of Governor Yager's first

22 Stuart, 258.
23 Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, to the Secretary of War, 1912, 21.
acts was to recommend the appointment of two Puerto Ricans as members of the Executive Council in place of two Americans. Mr. Martin Travieso, a well-known Puerto Rican lawyer, was appointed Secretary of the island. Mr. Manuel V. Domenech, an engineer of prominence, was appointed the first native Commissioner of the Interior. This changed the membership of the Executive Council to seven natives and four Americans, as compared with six Americans and five natives as contemplated by the framers of the Foraker Law.24

In his annual report for 1919 Governor Yager gave a most hopeful picture of the island's future from the progress he had observed:

On April 11, 1899, just twenty years ago, by the ratification of the treaty of Paris between the United States and Spain, Puerto Rico became definitely American territory, and the responsibility for the government and progress of the island became definitely ours. In the twenty years that have elapsed the changes that have been made are so very many and so important, and the progress in every line of human improvement and achievement has been made so remarkable that it may be worth while to make a brief survey in retrospect of what has been accomplished. It is especially necessary to make a survey of this sort at certain wide intervals of time, because like the general progress of a whole people the field of operation is so wide and varied and the changes in living conditions are so numerous and gradual that even those most affected by them are likely to forget the past and fail to estimate properly the importance of the progress achieved under our own eyes. The

24 Mixer, 85-86.
following table gives comparative statistics bearing on some important points of school work and progress during the two decades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1918</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>953,243</td>
<td>1,263,474</td>
<td>310,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils of school age</td>
<td>322,393</td>
<td>434,381</td>
<td>111,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils attending school</td>
<td>21,873</td>
<td>160,794</td>
<td>138,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>2,984</td>
<td>2,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils not in school</td>
<td>300,520</td>
<td>273,587</td>
<td>25,933 decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School houses</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short and in fine these two decades of progress made by Puerto Ricans under the American flag taken together constitute a record which I believe cannot be equaled by any people anywhere in the world in the same length of time. It is a record creditable alike to the Puerto Ricans themselves and to the great Republic to which they owe allegiance. Much of it is due to the liberality and generous aid of the great American government and people but most of the credit is due to the splendid cooperation of the Puerto Ricans themselves. In politics and government, in education, in commerce and industry, and in social and moral improvement they have offered their cooperative aid to the forces that have made for betterment.25

Governor Yager retired on May 11, 1921, and was succeeded by President Harding’s appointee, Governor E. Mont Reily, the same day. This unfortunate appointment of a time-serving poli-

tician, to the post of governor, did not please the Puerto Ricans. The bitter opposition on the part of the natives towards the Governor and the serious charges brought against him indicated that political henchmen do not furnish the best material for satisfactory governors of our colonial possessions.

The new governor had hardly arrived on the island before he was involved in serious difficulties with the Puerto Ricans. His dismissal of administrative officers and judges without hearing or without cause, and the filling of their posts by wholly inexperienced politicians; his insistence on increases in salaries for his particular henchmen; and his disregard of Puerto Rican interests and needs soon brought about a demand on the part of the Puerto Rican Senate that he be dismissed. A petition to this effect was laid before the Senate of the United States on March 7, 1922.

What made Governor Reily still more unpopular and disliked by the Puerto Ricans was the unwarranted removal from office of two Puerto Ricans, the heads of the Department of Health and of the Department of the Interior, despite the excellent records of good service that they held, defending his act with the statement that it was "for the good of the service." In their place he appointed two Americans, Dr. W. F. Lippett and Major John S. Wilson.

26 Mixer, 96.
At the time of this dissension the following article appeared in the *New York Times*:

Opposition to his administration was expressed, first, by the majority party of Puerto Rico, the Unionists, when he declared in his inaugural address against any agitation for the independence of the island. The Unionists later reversed their stand, but in November of the same year (1921) launched a campaign against the Governor. ... The attacks on Governor Reily brought several delegations from the island to protest before Secretary Weeks and President Harding. ... Charges of maladministration constituted the major complaints of the Puerto Ricans, who were led in their fight against the Governor by Antonio R. Bracelo, President of the Puerto Rican Senate, and Felix Cordova-Davila, resident commissioner from Puerto Rico.27

To relieve the whole unpleasant situation Governor Reily tendered his resignation on February 16, 1923, and twelve days later Horace M. Towner was appointed his successor.

Governor Towner, who, as chairman of the House Committee on Insular Affairs, was well acquainted with the situation on the island, entered upon his duties as Governor of Puerto Rico, April 6, 1923. In his inaugural address he declared that he hoped to lead, not to coerce; to advise, but not to impose; and he carried out this policy during his administration. He concluded his address with these words:

You (Puerto Ricans) have given the world a splendid example of what may be done in less than a single generation, by a liberty-loving, capable and intelligent people under Republican

27 *New York Times*, February 17, 1923, 6. (Quoted from *New Larned History*, 6848.)
institutions. We shall ever regard your advancement as one of the proudest chapters in the nation's history, and this record is alike creditable to Puerto Rico and to the United States.28

Speaking before the House of Representatives on January 11, 1924, in favor of permitting the Puerto Ricans to elect their own governor, Resident Commissioner Davila thus characterized Governor Towner:

At present we have in Porto Rico an able, diplomatic and sagacious executive. Governor Towner is one of the best governors the island has ever had. ... Should our people have the power to elect their own governor, Horace M. Towner might be the choice of the people. He has won the hearts of the people by his fairness and his sympathetic understanding of their methods.29

When in 1927 it was rumored that Governor Towner was to be removed because of ill health, a delegation, headed by the President of the Senate of Puerto Rico and the Speaker of the House, was immediately dispatched to Washington to present a concurrent resolution and a memorial urging the retention of Governor Towner:

'... because of his great ability as an executive, his untiring energy and his devotion to the fulfillment of his duties, because of his absolute spirit of justice and impartiality which forms his character ... his retention is absolutely indispensable

28 Stuart, 260.
for the continuance of the work undertaken by him for the solution of our social, economic and political problems. ... 30

A serious cause of discontent among the Puerto Ricans was the fact that the governors were, for the most part, political appointees of the President, and had neither experience nor interest in the problems of colonial government. Because the majority of them were ignorant of the Spanish language and rarely held office longer than two years, it could hardly be expected that they would be qualified to appreciate the Puerto Rican point of view.

The Puerto Ricans realized that so long as governors were appointed by the President of the United States, and largely upon a political basis, a Reily might be their future lot as often as a Towner; therefore, in January, 1924 a delegation, representing all the political parties in the island and headed by Governor Towner, went to Washington to plead for certain changes in the Jones Act which might bring about full self-government under American sovereignty. Perhaps the most important change desired was the right of the islanders to elect their own governor.

After hearing committees of both houses, a bill acceptable to the various political parties of Puerto Rico, to Governor Towner, and to the War Department of the United States

30 Stuart, 260. (Quoted from United States Daily, March 20, 1927.)
was drawn up. The outstanding feature was the provision that, beginning with the year 1932 and thenceforth, the qualified electors of Puerto Rico should elect the governor, provided that he be subject to removal by the President of the United States for due cause and to impeachment by the Puerto Rican legislature. The bill also provided for the abolition of the vice-governor, and that the head of the department of education and the attorney-general, as well as the other heads of departments, be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate of Puerto Rico instead of by the President of the United States with the consent of the United States Senate.

This bill was approved unanimously by the Senate on May 15, 1924 and received the sanction of the Insular Affairs Committee of the House, but it failed to come to a vote in the House. In 1926 the House did pass such a bill, but on this occasion the session adjourned before the Senate could act again. Although in 1925 President Coolidge had favored the principle of an elective governor, in a letter, dated February 28, 1928, to Governor Towner he showed no sympathy for Puerto Rican autonomy and declared that Puerto Rico had a greater sovereignty over its internal affairs than does the government of any state or territory of the United States. 31

31 Stuart, 262.
President Franklin D. Roosevelt was convinced that the Puerto Ricans were fully capable of electing their own governor. We have his message of December 1, 1943 in which his belief on this point is clearly substantiated:

Puerto Ricans of all political parties divergent of their views as to the political future of the island are united in asking for the right to elect their own governor. I believe that they are entitled to it. ... There is no reason why their governor and other officials should continue to be appointed from without. At this stage of Puerto Rican development, the withholding of this right is no longer necessary. There is no question of Puerto Rican ability now to administer their own internal affairs and to assume the attendant responsibility.32

Had President Franklin D. Roosevelt lived a few years longer, he undoubtedly would have used his influence to have Congress grant the Puerto Ricans the right to administer their own internal affairs. Perhaps, in a future not too far distant their desire for autonomy will be realized.

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CHAPTER III

PROGRESS IN PUERTO RICO

The problems of promoting sanitation and public health in Puerto Rico, which over-population, unemployment, and the low-earning capacity of the poor working classes make difficult of solution, now seem somewhat less threatening as a result of the intense activity shown by the island's government in its sanitary department. The main work, which had to be undertaken by the sanitary authorities, was concerned with four diseases: tuberculosis, malaria, hookworm, and enteritis or inflammation of the intestines.

Pertinent to sanitation and public health in Puerto Rico, Victor Clark states:

One of the first tasks of the military government in 1899 was to grapple with the problems of disease. On June 29, 1899 a Superior Board of Health was organized and entrusted with sanitary supervision of the island. The Organic Act of 1917, however, created a Department of Health. The United States Public Health Service and the Rockefeller Institute have also co-operated with the insular government in its efforts to better the health conditions on the island. ¹

American ownership of Puerto Rico prompted a most scientific investigation of the cause of anemia. This dreaded

¹ Clark, 55
plague had more than 90 per cent of the natives in its grip. Before the military authorities relinquished control of the island in 1900, Lieutenant Bailey K. Ashford, an American medical officer in Ponce, made the discovery on November 24, 1899 that the all-prevalent anemia, which incapacitates the natives for regular labor, is produced by the hookworm.

The hookworm, an animal parasite, enters the human body wherever the skin comes in contact with polluted soil. It travels through the circulatory system until it reaches the small intestine and there attaches itself and continues to grow. The poison which is excreted from the parasite destroys the red blood cells and causes the victim to become listless and dull, and to appear indifferent and lazy.

In spite of all efforts that have been made to conquer the hookworm disease progress has been slow. Deaths fell from 7,369 in 1899 to 483 in 1928. Governor Towner in his annual report for 1925 makes mention of the prevalence of this disease in both the rural and urban populations of the island:

It was long ago pointed out that 90 per cent of the rural population of the island is suffering from uncinariaisis (hookworm). This is not less true today. Indeed, we can now go further and say that 50 per cent of the urban population, at least in the smaller towns, have the disease. I do not mean that all these people are anemic, for many of them are not, but they harbor some of the parasites. ... During the year we made an examination of the school children of Ponce (the second largest city on
the island) and found 25 per cent of them infected.2

Tuberculosis in Puerto Rico is a public health problem also. The death rate in Puerto Rico is higher than in any civilized country for which figures are available. Jose Rodriguez Pastor, M.D., a leading authority in Puerto Rico, summarized what appear to be the leading causes for the growing ravages of this disease. These causes are:

Desperate economic conditions create overcrowding and very low standards of living in the poor barrios of all the towns. Lack of proper food is another cause. Large families and extremely low incomes keep hundreds of thousands of people continually on the verge of starvation. Recent migration of the peasants from the mountain regions where they had lived for a long time in comparative isolation to the urban centers of population, especially after the Great War, has been set forth as a theory to explain the increase in mortality from tuberculosis.3

The reality of Puerto Rican poverty cannot be too strongly emphasized. Father Leo Trese, describing a recent visit to the island with an Augustinian Spanish missionary, gives a graphic picture of conditions in Fonguito, one of the slums around San Juan:

We entered a shack here and there, visiting the sick; a young man of 20, syphilitic and intermittently insane; a middle-aged woman in the last stages of tuberculosis; a young matron dying. As I followed gingerly down the narrow lanes, stepping from tin cans to rocks in the vain hope of preserving dry feet; as I passed

2 Ibid., 65.
3 Ibid., 63.
here a little girl minus a hand, there another startlingly cross-eyed; here a one-legged boy and there a man with legs incredibly twisted beneath him; as I looked at naked children squatting in the scum, playing with empty bottles, and lean pigs rooting in the mire beside the children, it seemed like a horribly over-done movie set, an impossible nadir of human misery.4

The health problem is complicated in the island because of parasitical and bacteriological diseases. It is evident that the main cause of many of the ailments is due to polluted water. The majority of the people use the public streams, creeks, and brooks which are in close proximity to cesspools.

A greatly expanded program could be initiated to accomplish the following: (1) prevent indiscriminate fecal deposits; (2) dispose of refuse so as not to attract rodents and insects; (3) eradicate rats and their harborages; (4) require the cooking of garbage before feeding it to the swine in order to prevent trichinosis.5

It is the general trend of thought that the United States has done much for the betterment of the sanitary conditions on the island. Devastating plagues have been abolished and the death rate has been lowered. The people seem willing to cooperate with the medical authorities in measures that promise

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5 A Development Plan for Puerto Rico. Published by the Office of Information for Puerto Rico Planning Board, Santurce, P.R., January, 1944, 55.
their physical betterment. They prove this willingness to accept help and they do not shirk care except through ignorance or fear.

A school hygiene service was started on January 1, 1943 by the Maternal and Infant Hygiene Bureau of the Division of Public Health. During the last six months of the fiscal year, 46,001 children were inspected by nurses, and 10,124 examined by physicians. The Bureau conducted 141 clinics weekly for prenatal care; accepted 1,380 cases in its Crippled Children Division; gave dental care to 15,905 school children; and conducted 6,971 case consultations on nutrition problems. It also operated 144 milk stations, where free food was dispensed to 8,173 children. More than 40,000 undernourished children were served daily portions of milk and light lunches at 350 canteens maintained through the cooperative efforts of 1,000 women volunteers, sugar companies, the Insular Government, and the Federal Government.

About 270,000 Puerto Ricans live in houses that are badly constructed, insanitary, and in need of repair. Eight out of every ten houses are worth less than $400, or rent for less than $10 a month. Crowded, dirty, and insanitary houses, whether in the town or in the country, contribute to the gen-

7 The New International Year Book, 1944, 513.
eral poor health of the people, and encourage the spread of
disease. About one-third of the families have water piped to
their houses. The rest use water from wells, polluted rivers,
and streams. The "Jibaro" walking barefoot, the housewife
washing clothes, and the family drinking water from these
streams are exposed to infection.8

Joseph M. Mountain reporting on health conditions on the
island writes:

Low incomes, crowded and insanitary
homes, inadequate diet, and the prevalence
of certain endemic diseases are factors
which contribute to the high rate of ill-
ness in Puerto Rico. The total death rate
is approximately twice as high on the island
as on the continent.9

At the conference held in Barbados March 20-30, 1944, un-
der the auspices of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission,
Dr. Antonius Fernos-Isern, Health Commissioner on the island,
submitted the following plan for the improvement of public
health and welfare in Puerto Rico:

We plan to spend over 43 million dol-
lars in the next six years on public health
and welfare. More than half this amount
will be invested in improving the water and
sewage disposal systems in urban areas, and
laying out new systems where none exist, and
in providing potable water and latrines in
the rural areas. These measures should go
a long way toward eliminating the basic causes
of intestinal diseases....

8 Three-fourths Ill-fed, Ill-clothed, Ill-housed. Office of
Information for Puerto Rico, La Fortaleza, P. R., 1943, 19.
9 Joseph M. Mountain. "Illness and Medical Care in Puerto
Seven and a half million dollars will be invested in the construction of five new free general hospitals to be operated by the Insular Government, providing a total of 2,500 beds. ... In addition the construction of four anti-tuberculosis sanitaria, extension of the existing one, and construction of a new mental hospital, at a total cost of ten million dollars, will help to round out our hospital facilities.\textsuperscript{10}

Since 1899 education has made remarkable progress in Puerto Rico. It has been made compulsory, and a system of elementary schools on the American plan is in operation. The teachers are paid from the insular treasury and their salaries compare favorably with those paid the teachers in the United States. More than half of the teachers in the rural districts are men, and of about 4,475 teachers all are Puerto Rican except approximately 145 from the United States.

Many of the children of the wealthy class are educated in the United States and in Europe. Since the United States took control, illiteracy decreased from 85 per cent in 1899 to 41 per cent in 1930, and during 1931, 226,215 children were enrolled in the schools.\textsuperscript{11}

The report of M. G. Brumbaugh, Commissioner of Education, dated October 15, 1900 shows what had been accomplished in the short time that had elapsed after the Commissioner had entered upon his duties August 4, 1900. The report reads:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{10} Dr. A. Fernos-Isern. \textit{Postwar Planning in Puerto Rico.} Insular Procurement Office, San Juan, P. R., 1944, 12.
\textsuperscript{11} World Book Encyclopedia, XIII, 5751.
\end{flushright}
In 1899, 616 schools were opened in Puerto Rico. In 1900, the department will maintain at least 800 schools, an increase of 30 per cent which will provide for nearly 9,000 additional pupils. In 1899, there were 67 Americans in the teaching force of the island. Since October 1, 1900 the number has increased to 100. ... As to the school accommodations the commissioner states that there are no public school buildings in Puerto Rico. The schools are conducted in rented buildings, houses, or rooms which are often unfit for the purpose, and the hygienic conditions are bad. ... In 1899, $33,000 was expended for school books, and in 1900, $20,000 will be expended for books and supplies, which shall be free. ... The total expenditure for education in Puerto Rico from May 1 to the end of September was $91,057.32.12

As late as 1800 there were probably no schools in Puerto Rico outside of San Juan and San German. In 1899, out of a reported total but 15 per cent could read or write. The total number in all schools at that time was 22,265, or about 2 per cent of the population.

As soon as American occupation began in Puerto Rico the American military governors began to reform education there, inaugurating a new system as nearly like the free school system in the United States as was possible. In January, 1899 General Henry called Dr. John Eaton to assume charge of education. Many changes were made. Sixteen American supervisors were appointed, who were teachers of English. Dr. Eaton was succeeded by Mr. Victor Clark under whose direction a new code of laws was put into operation.

The first civil governor, Charles Allen, appointed Dr. Martin Brumbaugh as the first commissioner of education. He was assisted by Dr. Samuel Lindsay. In 1927 there were employed in the public schools 4,483 teachers, of whom 178 were from the United States and 4,305 from Puerto Rico.

The percentage of illiteracy has been reduced to below 40 per cent. As a result of special work 2,484 adults were taught to read and write during the year 1929. There are night schools in both rural and urban zones, enrolling during the year 4,269 pupils, mostly adults. There were 38 private accredited schools with 6,489 students in 1927. All these accepted the requirements and standards of the public schools and are inspected regularly by the supervisors.13

Dr. Clark was responsible for the first textbooks compiled for Puerto Rican schools. The Manual de Maestro, prepared under his direction, recommended to teachers a method for teaching elementary subjects and was used by the staff of the Department during this first period of American rule.

Dr. Samuel Lindsay succeeded Dr. Brumbaugh in 1904. His chief interest was in secondary education, and his chief contribution to the work in Puerto Rico was the establishment of the University of Puerto Rico. Dr. Roland Falkner, successor to Dr. Lindsay, made two radical changes in the curriculum. The first problem that confronted him was the growing demand

from parents for larger schools. The immediate difficulty in satisfying this demand came from the lack of teachers. The legislature helped him to solve this problem by shortening the training period of teachers and consequently the supply was increased. These teachers having passed the sixth grade were called preparatory teachers and were permitted to teach the first; however, they were under close supervision.

The second problem with which Dr. Falkner was faced was that of the inadequacy of teaching English. Textbooks were brought from the United States and American teachers were assigned to teach the children; but the new, as well as the old books, had been written for the children of the United States and did not meet the needs of the children of Puerto Rico.

Dr. E. G. Dexter, who succeeded Dr. Falkner, abandoned the idea of the "preparatory teacher." The first grade was re-organized and recognized as the foundation of the entire school system, and it was realized that the best talent and training were required for this grade.

Dr. Edward G. Bainter gave special attention to the teaching of agriculture, manual training, domestic science, music, and drawing. The trouble with its application, as with so many of our American ideas, was that immediate results were sought and the plan was given universal application instead of being first adapted to those municipalities whose finances and type of students made it possible of realization, and then more
gradually extending it to the more backward communities.

Dr. Miller indicated that the first effort in teaching a new language to all pupils of a country is a serious problem, especially when the teachers do not speak the language as their native tongue.¹⁴

Through various experiments and many changes since 1900 the present bi-lingual system has been evolved. The proportion in which each language is used as a teaching medium is shown in the table given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Either</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>37.5 %</td>
<td>28.1 %</td>
<td>34.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.95</td>
<td>36.95</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>47.34</td>
<td>25.35</td>
<td>27.31¹⁵</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In his annual report of 1916 Governor Yager gave the following facts on the development of Puerto Rico's schools:

The total enrollment in all public schools during the fiscal year 1915-16 was 151,562, of whom 1,050 were enrolled in the University of Porto Rico and 526 in charitable and correctional institutions. In addition to the pupils enrolled in public schools 5,832 children attended private schools and more than 400 Porto Rican students attended schools in the United States. One hundred seventy-two American and 2,296 Porto Rican teachers

¹⁴ Mixer, 227-234.
¹⁵ Ibid., 235.
taught in the 2,546 classrooms located in
the 1,506 different school buildings.
These buildings ranged in character from
straw covered shacks in the remote barrios
to the thoroughly modern concrete struc-
tures in the larger towns and cities.¹⁶

The Department of Education in Puerto Rico is divided
into two sections; namely, technical and administrative. The
technical division takes care of the work of teaching, super-
vising, courses of study, health education, extension work,
and publications. The administrative division consists of
the files, municipal school matters, property, accounts,
teachers' certificates, diplomas, and the approval or the re-
jection of appointments made by the municipal department.

Vocational schools are established in the city and rural
districts. The plans for these schools were made by the Fed-
eral and Insular Governments. The courses offered by these
schools are connected with agriculture, trades, domestic sci-
ence, and the industries derived therefrom.

The Puerto Ricans realize that until their school system
has a very high standard it will be difficult to carry out
programs for increasing intensity of land use, industrializa-
tion, or public health standards.

The continental Americans have shared somewhat in the
education of the Puerto Ricans, but the burden has fallen

¹⁶ Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico, Arthur Yager,
upon the islanders. Bailey Diffie gives the explanation for this in the following paragraph:

Hundreds of American teachers have gone to Porto Rico to teach English, but they were paid with Porto Rican money. None of this came out of the public purse of the United States. Their salaries, along with other expenses attached to English instruction, have been a crushing burden on the slender resources of the island ... and to the teaching of English the American government has never contributed one penny. Only to the college of agriculture have we given financial assistance. The progress made in the insular education is something of which to be proud, but Americans can have small share in this pride. ... The cold facts of the case are that the United States government has never interested itself in the educational problem. ... The struggle to educate the people would have been difficult enough with help and without obstacles; it has been impossible without help and with obstacles.17

In a letter received last year from Sister Mary Dolores, O.S.F., a teacher on the island, she gives some reasons for many children not attending school. She writes:

A very large number are unable to attend school. Only 50 per cent. of the children are able to attend, while of this number 50 per cent attend a whole-day session. To accommodate more children they have interlocking. The morning session runs from eight to twelve o'clock. At one o'clock another shift enters the same building with a different principal and a different body of teachers. Classes run to four-thirty and five. There can be no compulsory education but on the contrary, parents are so eager to get their children in that they beg the teacher. They pro-

vide in some instances a make-shift desk in order to get a seat in school.18

The Bureau of Statistics also made a careful study of the school population leaving school. It was found that 181,314 pupils between the ages of eight and fifteen had dropped out of school. This number was distributed in the grades as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>90,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hurricane of September, 1928 destroyed many school buildings, and about 2,300 school rooms out of a total of 4,470 rooms were either demolished or partially ruined by the wind. However, it is a remarkable fact that by December of the same year 90 per cent of the schools were again in operation. This fact testifies to the desire for and the appreciation of education on the part of the Puerto Ricans.20

Since 1898 the English language has been taught in the schools of Puerto Rico. At first the progress made was very slow; but as the people came to realize, more and more, that the knowledge of English would be a vehicle to a better social

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18 Sister Mary Dolores, O.S.F. Letter, April 29, 1945. See Appendix.
life for them in their association with the continental Americans, they have become more willing and even anxious to learn the mother tongue for their own benefits. According to the census of 1940 over 200,000 people on the island know English.

Commenting on the work that has been done in the field of improving English instruction in the elementary grades, the commissioner of education, Jose M. Gallardo, states:

The regular English program was improved this year by giving the English field assistants some supervisory activities. A course of study was published which gave the elementary teachers of the island organized materials to improve the efficiency of teaching. The basic word list was revamped and 600 words were assigned to the primary grade level. ...

A publication, the Inter-American News Letter, was originated and is being mailed monthly to 300 teachers of English in twenty-two American republics. 21

Special emphasis was placed on the development of reading technique in all the elementary grades. The improvement of language in its oral and written forms was developed in a functional way. The proper place for literature in the language as a means of enriching the experiences of the child was planned. 22

The basic aim for English instruction was to satisfy the pupils' desire and need to learn English by fostering skills in the four language arts; namely, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. 23

21 Jose M. Gallardo, 31-32.
22 Ibid., 32.
23 Ibid., 34.
Dr. J. J. Osuna treats of the use of English in the Puerto Rican schools in the following manner:

The linking of the destiny of the people of Puerto Rico with that of the people of the United States brought, as an immediate result, an urgent need for Puerto Ricans to become familiar with the English language and American culture. From the first days of American institutions, the place of English in our school curriculum has been a very vexing problem. ... We have clearly realized not only the convenience but the absolute necessity of learning English. ... We all realize that culturally, politically, and economically English is of inestimable value to our people.24

Governor Rexford Tugwell, in his address to the Fifteenth Legislature, Second Session, spoke on the language question in these words:

There is always one problem which torments educators in Puerto Rico. This is the question of language. It has perhaps been wise to adopt a compromise position. The rich cultural background of the Spanish would be an inestimable loss if the unthinkable attempt were made to substitute another language for it. Yet, Puerto Rican youths, especially those who have the talent to enter the managerial class to become teachers, civil servants, to do all those paper-work tasks which modern society so much depends on, need English too.25

The language question was given special attention during the year 1943. Two experts from the United States were brought

24 J. J. Osuna. Statehood and the Question of English in Puerto Rico. E. Franklin & Co., San Juan, P. R., 6. (Date of publication is not given.)
to the island to give special tests to school children, and to
determine the effect on the general process of teaching in two
languages. Efforts were made to improve the teaching of English,
and an extra period of English was established in grades three
through six.26

The schools of the island are supported entirely from is­
land revenues, but these have not proved sufficient. The fol­
lowing figures show that, during the last four years, the cur­
rent outlays for education have not been increasing so rapidly
as has the population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1928</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public school expenditures per</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 of the rural population</td>
<td>$4,945</td>
<td>$4,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enrollment per 1,000 people</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban enrollment per 1,000</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>219**7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has been a policy of the United States government to
promote education of the people of our insular possessions.
Moreover, the Union may reasonably expect to derive important
cultural and commercial, as well as political, benefits from
making Puerto Rico a liaison between English-speaking and
Spanish-speaking America. In view of these facts the federal
government, it would seem, should at least assume the cost of
teaching English in the schools of Puerto Rico since this

26 Forty-third Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico,
Honorable Rexford G. Tugwell, 1943, 24.
27 Clark, 90.
instruction constitutes a special burden upon the resources of the island, and for some years ought to be given in consider-
able part by teachers whose mother tongue is English.

As a solution to the financial problem of education in Puerto Rico, it has been suggested that the islanders be al-
lowed to share in the benefits of the subsidies that the fed-
eral government has made, from time to time, for education in the states. In 1924 Governor Towner recommended that the bene-
fits of the Smith-Hughes Act, which was enacted in 1917, be ex-
tended to the Puerto Ricans. This recommendation was given considera-
tion by Congress. The chief objection to it seems to have been the fear that the inclusion of Puerto Rico in the act would lessen the amount available for the states. The issue should be re-opened with a view to making funds available to Puerto Rico without subtracting the amount from that already appropriated to the states.28

Conditions have not changed much since 1923. About 75 per-
cent of the children who attend the rural schools receive three years' instruction, their school day being only half as long as the town pupils, so that their schooling amounts to about one
and one-half years' training altogether.

The problem is obviously impossible of solution without an additional large expenditure of public funds. The alternative

28 Clark, 92.
seems to be that instead of offering the "jibaros" education to the third grade and then sending them home to become routine farmers like their parents, to provide them an elementary school course for six years with intensive instruction in agriculture for two years longer. If students of rural schools can be made good farmers, the Department of Education will have achieved one of its aims: to prepare pupils to do better that which they are going to do anyhow as farmers.29

Since most of Puerto Rico's income is from the soil and probably will continue to come from that source, her prospective returns from agriculture are of first importance in forecasting her economic future.

The soil itself, which was not extremely fertile at the time of the first Spanish settlement nearly four and a half centuries ago, has been subject to much abuse through continued use for specialized farming without adequate provision for conserving its productive qualities. Nearly 70 per cent of the total land area is subject to moderate or severe sheet erosion, with more than 25 per cent of the top soil washed away. Since much of the highly eroded land is in mountainous areas, the effect of erosion on productivity has been less than these figures might indicate. But the loss of good top-soil from hillside fields only serves to aggravate the increased pres-

29 Clark, 567.
sure of people on the land. Of the 845,056 cudas well adapted to cultivation, according to the Soil Conservation Service 75 per cent requires complex or intensive practices; and of the land suited to pasture, 63 per cent requires similar practices. These land problems have been further complicated by natural conditions such as periods of drought, heavy tropical rains, and hurricanes. The latter have caused great destruction of property through both wind and floods. 30

The Department of Agriculture and Commerce was established in Puerto Rico in 1917 by the Organic Act of Puerto Rico. This is also known as the Jones Law. In 1927 it became known as the Department of Labor; however, the two departments were separated and now the Department of Agriculture is better known. The duties of the Commissioner of Agriculture are established by Articles 18 of the Organic Act of Puerto Rico and Article 4 of Act 25 of 1931 passed by the Insular Legislature:

The former stipulates that the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce shall be in charge of all sections and branches of the government which have been or may be legally constituted for the study, advancement, and benefit of agriculture, commerce, and other industries; ... said commissioner must also perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law. 31

30 Puerto Rico Planning Board, 16. (A Development Plan for P. R.) 31 Golden Album of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Havana, Cuba, 1939. (Pages are unnumbered.)
Puerto Rico has long stressed the production of the three great export staples: sugar, tobacco, and coffee, to which fruits, coconuts, cotton, and some minor products make fairly important additions. A certain amount of land, which might produce food, lies idle; and presumably a complex of conditions exists in Puerto Rico limiting this form of agriculture. Discussing this question in his report for 1924, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor said:

Food crops are planted principally in the interior of the island in elevated or mountain country. Their cultivation should be encouraged for they form the basis of the rural population's food. They have commanded very good prices this year. Yautias, yams, and sweet potatoes are nourishing and require little attention. Many tracts of pasture and other lands are not under cultivation that could be planted in these crops.32

Mr. Diffie quoting the American journalist, Henry Kittredge Norton, writes:

'Millions upon millions of dollars have been invested in the island since 1900. The men who have invested this money in many cases looked for returns much higher than those usually obtainable at home. Is that not what a colony is for? Mercantilism's answer has always been in the affirmative. Their chief interests have been in dividends, not in the people of Puerto Rico.'33

Referring to the sugar situation on the island, a rather unfavorable picture of it is given us by Mr. Diffie in the

32 Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor, 1923-24, 13.
33 Diffie, 89.
Nothing has disappointed the Puerto Ricans more than the sugar business. The industry does not belong to the natives but to ourselves. The profits are not enjoyed by those who make them possible but by those who never see Puerto Rico. The wages, which in bulk are so large, are now known to be miserably inadequate for the sustenance of life. ... Sugar interests have taken charge of the Legislature and of the Insular Affairs, and rendered the people impotent to help themselves. However glittering the sugar industry may appear to outsiders, the Puerto Ricans know that it has no pay. Sugar economy has proved to be bad economy for Puerto Rico.34

The development of the tobacco industry in Puerto Rico has been proportionally as great as the sugar cane industry. In 1899 the total land in tobacco growing was about 6,000 acres, while in 1929 it had reached 30,000 acres—about five times as much. This increase has been due to the aid and the encouragement given by the government, the distribution of seeds, the experimentation in the destruction of parasites, and the fertilization of the soil.

In his annual report for 1943 Governor Tugwell records the following data on the tobacco industry:

A lack of fertilizer during the tobacco season limited the acreage planted in this crop to between 12,000 and 14,000 acres. Tobacco acreage allotments were granted to 22,000 growers. The total allotment for Puerto Rico was 30,600 acres. The program now under consideration has a twofold purpose: (1) to make

34 Ibid., 88.
available financial assistance to growers of tobacco and other crops; and improve marketing conditions of guaranteeing prices.35

Tobacco, the third ranking product of Puerto Rico, has an established market in the United States. From 1929 to the present, approximately 25 per cent of the tobacco leaf used in the United States for the manufacture of cigars was produced in Puerto Rico.36

The manufacture of cigars in Puerto Rico has not increased in recent years. There are several companies producing cigars and cheroots in the island, most of them for export to the United States. Records of shipments made to the mainland during a recent five-year period are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>64,992</td>
<td>$1,463,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>61,227</td>
<td>1,322,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-36</td>
<td>53,297</td>
<td>1,095,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>50,339</td>
<td>951,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>12,003</td>
<td>215,18937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the system of tenure prevailing in the sugar districts, it is found that in the tobacco districts, 47 per cent of the farms are operated by their owners and 31 per cent by tenants or share croppers. The average size of the farms is

36 Puerto Rico, Industrial and Commercial, Government of Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture and Commerce, San Juan, P. R., New York Service, N. Y., 1938, 32.
37 Ibid., 34.
the few plantations, operated in part by wage-workers, average a little over 60 acres in size; the smaller owner- or tenant-operated farms average only 14 acres.

The tobacco farms are not utilized exclusively for tobacco. The tobacco plants are set out commonly in November and the harvest takes place in February and March. After the tobacco is cleared away, the same fields are used for maize, beans, rice, yams, and other food crops which are harvested in May and June. Furthermore, only about a quarter of the area of the average farm is used for tobacco; the remainder is devoted to additional food crops and to the grazing of animals.38

In contrast to the properties used for the production of sugar cane, tobacco, and fruit, which have been developed mostly by capital from the United States and which are profitable largely because of the fact that Puerto Rico has direct access to the market in the United States, the coffee plantations are for the most part owned by Puerto Ricans. The coffee business is less profitable now than it was formerly, precisely because of the fact that the produce must be sold in the United States. When Puerto Rico ceased to be a colony of Spain, the Spanish government promptly placed a tariff against imports of coffee from this island; and as a result, the Puerto Rican coffee planters lost their traditional market. But the people of the

38 James, 784-785.
United States, long accustomed to the flavor of Brazilian coffee roasted in the North American manner, did not develop an appreciation for the fine aroma of the West Indian product. Coffee planting in Puerto Rico has been declining since the beginning of the period of possession by the United States.39

Rafael de Cordero, Auditor of Puerto Rico, in addressing the Lion's Club at Mayaguez, November 26, 1943, stated the following facts concerning the coffee industry:

Of the products of greater importance in our economy, only coffee has not depended in the past on the market of the United States. It was shipped to Cuba and Europe. In recent years our coffee has had to look for acceptance in the markets of the United States, although it does not have there, like sugar, tobacco, rum, fruit, and needle work, tariff protection against competition of coffee producing countries.40

In recent years the commercial production of tropical fruits has outranked tobacco in value. The more important of products included in this class are grapefruit, oranges, and pineapple. Fruit production is largely in the hands of planters who came to Puerto Rico from the United States. They operate their own farms and groves and reside on them permanently. The chief area of citrus fruit production is located along the northern coast just to the west of San Juan, where the plantations are easily accessible to the port and where the trans-

39 Ibid., 786.
portation problem is reduced to a minimum. By 1908 the export of fruit had already passed a million dollars a year, and by 1928 it had passed seven million dollars. The fruit-growing area in the mountains south of San Juan is of more recent origin, and is devoted more especially to the growing of pineapple.  

For many years Puerto Rico has been a fruit-producing center of great importance. Sales to overseas markets, principally the continental American markets, are composed of fresh and canned grapefruit and pineapple, although there are increasing quantities of citrus, coconuts, and other minor tropical fruits being exported.

In 1930-31 the citrus fruit industry shipped close to 1,000,000 boxes of grapefruit to the United States. A hurricane caused heavy losses in the industry in 1932 and shipments fell off. It is estimated that about 6,000 acres of bearing and young groves have either been abandoned or so neglected that they are no longer of commercial importance.

The once reasonably prosperous grapefruit and pineapple business may be considered war casualties. Both are now reduced to producing for local consumption, except for a small volume of canned pineapple and pickled citron. Shipping difficulties put a stop to the export of fresh fruit before the

41 James, 786.
beginning of 1943. Shipments of pickled citron amounted to 4,069,021 pounds.\textsuperscript{42}

In Cuba pineapple is grown on a larger scale than the limited area of Puerto Rico permits, and shipping facilities are better and cheaper than from the latter named island; nevertheless, the Puerto Rican growers can deliver grapefruit to New York at a time when other shipping centers are not yet ready. In September, 1928, for example, 200 carloads of grapefruit reached New York from Puerto Rico as against 4 from Florida. If, however, abnormal weather conditions prevent the shipping of fresh fruit, the canning industry comes to their relief.\textsuperscript{43}

Puerto Rico with its low standards of living does not afford a local market extensive enough to support either great industrial establishments or a dispersed industry with a large aggregate output, so it is in the volume of foreign commerce that the island has made the most phenomenal progress, having risen from $17,502,103 in 1901 to $199,377,724 in 1940. The share of the United States in this trade has increased from 71 percent to 96 per cent in this period. At the present time Puerto Rico ranks first among the Latin-American countries as a market for United States and ninth in our world export trade.

This table, prepared from statistics found in the Annual Report of the Governor for 1941, shows graphically the commercial progress of the island:

\textsuperscript{42} Honorable Rexford G. Tugwell, 54.\textsuperscript{43} Clark, 433-435.
Merchandise from Puerto Rico to the United States... | $5,581,288 | $90,902,156
--- | --- | ---
Merchandise from Puerto Rico to foreign countries... | 3,002,679 | 1,445,086
Total trade with the United States... | 12,546,696 | 191,419,340
Total trade with foreign countries... | 4,955,407 | 7,958,384

But in spite of this imposing facade of statistics the condition of the people of the island today is not a happy one. And, paradoxically, the very improvements instituted by the United States have been one of the fundamental causes of the present tragic situation. As a result of the improved sanitary and health measures the population is greater than the island in its present condition can support. It has been more than doubled under American rule and in 1940 was estimated at 1,870,000, a density of over 500 to the square mile. The United States, an industrial nation, has a density of only 41 to the square mile. Even with the valiant efforts of the Roosevelt administration, 82 per cent of the people were on relief rolls.

With regard to the commercial relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico Governor Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., reported the following:

44 Stuart, 268.
The most striking feature of Puerto Rican relations with the continental United States is the island's position as the mainland's fourth best customer in so-called Latin-America. In 1930 Puerto Rico, with an area equal approximately to that of Connecticut, bought $74,000,000 worth of merchandise, thus earning a prominent place among the markets of the vast trade territory which extends from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. . . .

The island's economic existence depends almost entirely on the production of export crops, and as a result of this, large quantities of even the most basic food stuffs must be imported. In Puerto Rico, therefore, where such a large part of production is earmarked for overseas shipment, purchasing power depends to a very great extent on the profitable marketing of exports. It is in this connection that the mainland can help the island and, by so doing, help itself. . . . The present economic study of Puerto Rico telling as it does something about the island's importance as an actual and potential source of supply, as well as analyzing the demand for imported goods, appears to be decidedly to the point, and very timely.46

Dr. J. J. Osuna, Dean of the University of Puerto Rico, in a letter to the writer, January 19, 1945, gives an opinion on the question of progress in the island. He writes:

You are right in surmising that the rapid progress we have made in Puerto Rico has been done greatly by our own efforts, but that does not mean that the United States has not done a great deal for Puerto Rico. Personally, I feel that the contribution that the United States has made to Puerto

Rico is incalculable. But I also feel that the United States could have done still more than they have. If we have the progress that we have, it is because the United States has inspired us to achieve that progress. Since 1932, the United States has done a great deal for Puerto Rico financially.47

Much has been made of the physical and economic progress of the island and these phases cannot be overlooked in attempting to evaluate the success of American rule in Puerto Rico. When the United States took over the island in 1899 there were but 267 kilometers of completed roads; in 1940 there were 2,000 kilometers. In 1899 there were practically no public school buildings worthy of the name; in 1940 there were over 2,000. The number of students had increased from 45,000 to over 250,000. The University of Puerto Rico has over 5,000 students enrolled, and the School of Tropical Medicine is one of the outstanding institutions of its kind. Such agencies as quarantine, hospitals, and sanitary systems for guarding the public health have been introduced; and some diseases, such as yellow fever and smallpox have been almost completely wiped out; while others have been brought under control. A modern and just taxation system has been put into operation and a strict auditing system has been provided. It should also be noted that all the customs, duties, and internal revenue taxes collected in the island go to Puerto Rico and these have already amounted to

over $50,000,000. The island is exempt from the federal income
tax and, likewise, the inheritance tax. 48

In his Inaugural Address of September 19, 1941 Governor
Tugwell summed up all that he hoped to bring about during his
administration for the future of the Puerto Ricans. He said:

In bettering public health, in educating children, in bringing power, light, and
sanitation into people's homes, in building more homes for the underprivileged, in pro-
viding all kinds of needed public works, in the conservation of soil and other resources,
in replanting forests, in the use and tenure of the land, in the search for higher wages
and greater social security, in all these we shall find work enough crowding upon us in
the years to come. We must not avoid any of it. We must bring to bear on the tasks to be
done all the resources we can find of administrative ability, good judgment, and energy.49

48 Stuart, 269.
49 Lear, 73.
CHAPTER IV

PUERTO RICO TODAY

After forty-seven years of American occupation, what is a fair judgment of conditions in Puerto Rico? This question, like many others, may be answered in more than one way; but those who wish to face facts must recognize the progress that really has been made in Puerto Rico.

No country ever started nearer the bottom than Puerto Rico did; and few, if any, have ever set about climbing in any more determined manner. No praise is too flattering to the men who have contributed to the growth of the island, and yet they have struggled against odds that were great. The problems of a generation ago are still the problems of the people of Puerto Rico.¹

In another letter received from Dr. J. J. Osuna, he expressed his opinion with regard to the progress made in Puerto Rico since American occupation in 1898 and to the attitude of the islanders toward independence as follows:

The progress of the Puerto Ricans since 1898 has been marked in every way, social, economic, agricultural, and educational. Some extremists would have us believe that progress is fictitious, but those of us who have observed the course of events for the last fifty years feel that it is most real. With reference to the attitude of the people toward inde-

¹ Diffie, 199-200.
dependence, I may say that this issue has never been put up to the people for a decision. ... Some of the people believe that we should maintain our union with the United States permanently, having statehood as the ultimate goal; while others believe in breaking our ties with the United States entirely and constituting ourselves into a sovereign, independent republic. 2

Another Puerto Rican, Jose Padin, who was the Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico in 1915, made the following statements relevant to progress on the island and to the question of statehood:

In general, I should say that during the last 47 years Puerto Rico has made great progress, material progress, under the American flag. It would be impossible to come into the orbit of American influence and escape entirely its effects. Whether Puerto Rico has made all the progress that one had the right to expect under such beneficent political guardianship is questionable and each must answer for himself. Personally, I don't think it has. Congress has neglected the Island. There has been no clear policy for its development. ... When the Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris, the national obligation with respect to the welfare of Puerto Rico became binding. Congress has never taken that obligation very seriously. And it is a pity, for the Treaty of Paris laid the fate of the people of Puerto Rico right in the hands of the Congress of the United States. . . .

The Island is divided between those who want statehood and those who prefer independence. Right now there is no indication here on the Continent that anyone seriously favors statehood for Puerto Rico. The choice appears

2 Dr. J. J. Osuna. Letter, November 9, 1944. See Appendix.
to be between continuing to be an insular possession or becoming a full-fledged member of the American family of nations. I should say, therefore, that today those who favor independence seem to be in the majority, for very obvious reasons. Independence without free access to the American market would mean economic death to Puerto Rico. Consequently, those who favor independence are at this time trying to write into the independence bill a period of re-adjustment during which the Island would receive special tariff treatment that would enable it to adapt its economy to its new political status. 3

The belief that there has never been a real movement for independence in Puerto Rico is supported by many, in particular the statement, that there does not exist a formidable movement with this end in view, was expressed by an authority, who is well qualified to judge. On the occasion of the President's visit to the island in March, 1931, this same belief was expressed. The reports coming from Puerto Rico were to the effect that the independence movement had collapsed completely. Perhaps what those who hold this opinion really mean is that no movement for independence ever came near being successful. 4

In an apparent effort to counteract nationalist propaganda and to reinforce the "good neighbor" policy, Senator Millard E. Tydings of Maryland introduced in the United States Senate on April 23, 1936, with administration approval and support, a bill offering Puerto Rico the opportunity to vote

4 Diffie, 186.
in November, 1937 on the proposition: Shall the people of Puerto Rico be sovereign and independent. The provision stated that if the bill were affirmative an island convention was to draft a constitution subject to the approval of the President of the United States and ratification by the people of Puerto Rico.

Following its adoption the island was to assume the status of a commonwealth for four years and then become independent. ... Consequently the bill was viewed by many Puerto Ricans as an attempt to force the rejection of independence by coupling it with economic suicide. The result was a wave of resentment and bitterness.⁵

Such a bill was a bombshell in the island where it was well known that independence would mean economic ruin. Nor was the fact overlooked that for two years the United States had been spending about one million dollars a month of its own relief funds in Puerto Rico. The reaction in the island to the bill was noticeably hostile, and the Liberal Party which favored independence suffered a substantial defeat in the fall elections of 1936. The bill itself was not even discussed in committee and the political future of the island remained a question mark.⁶

⁵ New International Year Book, 1936, 644.
⁶ Stuart, 265.
Pertinent to the problem of the future status of Puerto Rico, Dr. J. J. Osuna expressed himself in the following terms:

We must admit that the problem of the future status of this island is a most perplexing one. Some of our citizens wish to be independent like the people of Cuba, Santo Domingo, etc., while others, - and I sincerely believe the majority of us, - after 45 years of union with the United States do not wish to break the bonds which were established in 1898 and have been strengthened during the course of those 45 years of relations with our fellow citizens from the continent. We are much disturbed that after 45 years of such close relations, after having been endowed with all rights and privileges inherent to American citizenship, Senator Tydings should want to get rid of us in such an easy way, in the name of liberty. One of the chief reasons for this attitude is that we do not know English, the language of our nation. The fact is that our nation has never had a definite, straightforward policy for Puerto Rico. Uncertainty has prevailed in every phase of insular life, whether political, economic, or educational. For the past 45 years we have been like a ship adrift on the Caribbean Sea, without a pilot, without a home port, without a destination. Unfortunately, this situation of uncertainty has created an atmosphere full of complexes, distrust, and misunderstandings, which has been exploited for selfish and unworthy purposes in the name of patriotism. The teaching of English has been one of these very much exploited subjects.7

In regard to the bill pertaining to independence for Puerto Rico, Juan Pedrosa, City Commissioner of San Juan, in

a hearing before the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs said:

As an American citizen I am opposed to the bill introduced by Senator Tydings granting independence to Puerto Rico. Since Congress granted American citizenship to the inhabitants of Puerto Rico, no one with authority to speak in behalf of the people of the island has ever asked for independence, and every Puerto Rican is proud of being a loyal citizen of the United States. ... The mere presentation of that bill in the United States by a senator of the high standing of Senator Tydings has tortured the feelings of all the American citizens of Puerto Rico. ... I want to say something in regard to the statement of one of the witnesses who spoke for the bill, Mr. Perea, who stated that 'No progress has been made by Puerto Ricans in public education and public health during the last 40 years.' The records show that when the island passed from Spain to the United States we had 400 public schools with an attendance of 30,000 pupils and only $150,000 were spent yearly in public education. Today we have 4,000 school houses, with an attendance of 300,000 pupils, and yearly appropriations of more than $8,000,000. As to public health, in 1898 the total expense for same was $50,000 and now we spend more than $4,000,000, which shows 1,000 per cent improvement in the health conditions of the island. ... I finally declare that the bill is unfair, unjust, cruel, and harmful to the island. ...
following thought-provoking statements:

The Caribbean island of Puerto Rico has been under political subjection ever since Christopher Columbus discovered it in 1493. It was a colony of Spain until 1898, when the United States became sovereign. Its people have been struggling for freedom for more than a hundred years. They hope and expect that out of the peace settlement after this war there will come for them greater freedom, a more dignified status. They believe that the Atlantic Charter has for them a special meaning. After forty years, the promise of General Miles seems to them about to be redeemed.

If they are to make progress in their ambition, the Puerto Ricans must maintain the confidence and respect of the people of the United States. And the people of the United States, for the sake of national safety, must have the friendship of this island which serves us as a war base. 9

In order that faith may be kept of both sides, it is necessary for the role of the island's governor to be understood, for he has the dual responsibility of being the representative of the President of the United States and the administrative head of the Puerto Rican government.

Being Governor of Puerto Rico is unquestionably one of the most difficult administrative tasks in the world. The colonial status of the island is reflected in its devious politics. Appointment by the President frees the Governor from dependence on any of the constantly shifting parties, yet leaves him prey to attack by any party which is dissatisfied. No Governor ever has escaped this, but those who believed most in laissez-faire government suffered least.

9 Lear, 5.
Since the United States took Puerto Rico from Spain in 1898, laissez-faire has meant acceptance of political, economic and social domination by a small private oligarchy.10

To understand this is to understand how a governor can be the most popular executive in the history of the island, can command a working majority in support of his program in the four legislative sessions of his first year in office, and yet can be made to appear on the mainland as a hated tyrant.

The case of the present governor, the Honorable Rexford G. Tugwell, may be cited as an illustration of this. Even before he assumed the governorship of Puerto Rico in September, 1941, he had won the confidence of the islanders, when back in 1934, while he was Assistant United States Secretary of Agriculture, he had joined them, quite by accident, in their battle against the feudalism of sugar on the island; and which incidentally they had won although the sugar corporations had carried the fight up to the United States Supreme Court.11

Governor Tugwell had been in office scarcely three months when World War II broke out. He had foreseen its coming and, aware of the problems that it inevitably would create, had planned how to meet them. In these plans he had the support of the majority of the Legislature, but from the very beginning the Coalitionists had opposed him and had even tried to discred-

10 Ibid., 9.
11 Ibid., 9-10.
it him in the eyes of the Administration by painting him as a "quisling," dangerously dividing the island in time of war, thus giving the States the mistaken impression of uncertain loyalty; whereas actually, Governor Tugwell was using every opportunity to show the mainland the island's faith and courage. His enemies even went so far as to accuse him of ruling as a tyrant, but he has been able to destroy all basis for the bogey story of tyranny. 13

In February, 1943 an investigating committee, headed by Senator Dennis Chavez (Democrat from New Mexico) arrived at Puerto Rico from the United States for the purpose of holding an inquiry into social, economic, and political conditions. Governor Tugwell was called upon to make a general report on affairs in the island. In his comprehensive report he strongly endorsed the policy of autonomy to Puerto Rico, especially in regard to the election of the governor. This point became one of the principal recommendations of the Chavez committee. 14

The year 1943 was one of considerable strain, economically and politically, for Puerto Rican depredations by Axis submarines and dislocations of normal sources of supplies and food through wartime restrictions and operations brought about great shortages; agricultural crops were lighter than in the

12 Ibid., 105.
13 Ibid., 224.
14 Britannica Book of the Year, 1944, 578.
two years previous. Military installations were largely com-
pleted, thus throwing unemployed labor onto the market, and
the colonial government itself was called into question. Both
in the United States and in the island pressure was increased
for autonomy or independence.15

That this pressure has been gaining momentum on the is-
land can easily be gleaned from the following extract from a
broadcast that was made on May 26, 1945 over the Columbia New
York by Luis Munoz-Marín, President of the Senate of Puerto
Rico:

The legislature of Puerto Rico has unan-
imously proposed to the Congress of the United
States a clear-cut, straightforward method of
solving the colonial problem on the basis of
self-domination, in democratic terms, and in
the fiber of American policy and tradition.
The Puerto Rican proposal is as follows: At
the request of the Legislature of Puerto Rico,
all political parties concurring, a bill has
been introduced in the Senate of the United
States by Senator Millard E. Tydings of Mary-
land, and in the United States House of Rep-
resentatives by Resident Commissioner Pinero
of Puerto Rico. This bill contains four ti-
tles and offers the three alternative forms
of government to the people of Puerto Rico.

Title I provides that there shall be a
referendum in which the people shall decide
whether they want independence under certain
economic conditions necessary for their sur-


Title II describes independence.

15 Ibid., 578.
Title III describes statehood.

Title IV describes dominion status.

It is worthy of note that the proposal provides that the United States shall have in perpetuity all the military and naval bases and rights that they may need in Puerto Rico for the defense of the United States and the Western Hemisphere. This is of great importance as Puerto Rico constitutes one of the chief military protections of the Panama Canal, and has been called by authorities "The Gibraltar of the Caribbean." Parallel with these perpetual rights of the United States, under any form of government that the people of Puerto Rico may choose, certain minimum economic conditions are established also under any form of government that the people of Puerto Rico may choose. ... 

The proposal that the Legislature of Puerto Rico has unanimously presented to the Congress of the United States is a self-determination proposal as embodied in Senate Bill 1002 and in House Bill 3237. We make this proposal both as a claim of justice for Puerto Rico and as a contribution to American leadership, a leadership so completely necessary for the prevention of future wars in the minds and hearts of average men and women the world over. For both reasons we hope to receive for our proposal the support of the American people.16

On the occasion of his visit to Tucson, Arizona, in the fall of 1945, the Most Reverend James Peter Davis, Bishop of Puerto Rico, discussed present-day problems with the Arizona representative of The Register, who reported it as follows:

The people of Puerto Rico feel that Rexford G. Tugwell will be the last American governor of the island, the Most Reverend James Peter Davis, Bishop of San Juan, Puerto Rico, declared in Tucson.

'The next head, they expect, will be a native elected by them,' said the Bishop now in the United States to attend the annual meeting of the American Hierarchy November 14 to 17.

'Tugwell,' he added, 'is well liked by the majority of the people because he is sincere in his efforts to improve the lot of the common people. He is disliked by the sugar barons, having opposed them since his appointment.'

Bishop Davis feels that after nearly half a century of apparent disinterest in Puerto Rico, the United States is at last awakening to the problems of the peoples of that territory and is attempting to do something about them.

'It has been only in the past five or six years this country has attempted to solve the difficulties existing in that country, in regard to political status and living conditions,' he said.

In the Bishop's opinion, only 25 percent of the people have an understanding of the country's problem.

In that section some feel that the United States owes them independence and all that goes with it. This group wants the United States to insure them all necessary things for survival yet to have no part in their government.

'Others want to be cut off entirely, believing they can survive on their own. Some want statehood, particularly those with investments and businesses. The remainder want a form of commonwealth under
the guidance of the United States,' the Bishop said.

'The other 75 per cent of the people spend their time following one leader and then another,' he stated.

With no resources, Bishop Davis sees little chance for Puerto Rico to survive as an independent nation. 'The independence leaders lack realism, falsely seeing independence as an automatic solution to all their problems,' he said.17

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APPENDICES
Appendix A

Foraker Act

The fundamental provisions of the act of the Congress (Foraker Act) of the United States to provide temporarily for the civil government of Porto Rico, which the President approved April 12, 1900, are the following:

Section 6. That the capital of Porto Rico shall be at the city of San Juan and the seat of government shall be maintained there.

Section 7. That all inhabitants continuing to reside therein who were Spanish subjects on the eleventh day of April, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, and then resided in Porto Rico, and their children born subsequent thereto, shall be deemed and held to be citizens of Porto Rico, and as such entitled to the protection of the United States, except such as shall have elected to preserve their allegiance to the Crown of Spain on or before the eleventh day of April, nineteen hundred, in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of peace between the United States and Spain entered into on the eleventh day of April, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine; and they, together with such citizens of the United States as may reside in Porto Rico, shall constitute a body politic under the name of The People of Porto Rico, with governmental powers as hereinafter conferred, and with power to sue and be sued as such.

Section 8. That the laws and ordinances of Porto Rico now in force shall continue in full force and effect, except as altered, amended, or modified hereinafter, or as altered or modified by military orders and decrees in force when this Act shall take effect, and so far as the same are not inconsistent or in conflict with the statutory laws of the United States not locally inapplicable, or the provisions hereof, until altered, amended, or repealed by the legislative authority hereinafter provided for Porto Rico or by Act of Congress of the United States: Provided, That so much of the law which was in force at the time of cession, April eleventh, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, forbidding the marriage of priests, ministers, or followers of any faith because of vows they may have taken, being paragraph four, article eighty-three, chapter three, civil code, and which was continued by the order of the secretary of justice of Porto Rico, dated March seventeenth,
eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, and promulgated by Major-
General Guy V. Henry, United States Volunteers, is hereby re-
pealed and annulled, and all persons lawfully married in Porto
Rico shall have all the rights and remedies conferred by law
upon parties to either civil or religious marriages: And pro-
vided further, That paragraph one, article one hundred and
five, section four, divorce, civil code, and paragraph two,
section nineteen, of the order of the minister of justice of
Porto Rico, dated March seventeenth, eighteen hundred and
ninety-nine, and promulgated by Major-General Guy V. Henry,
United States Volunteers, be, and the same hereby are, so
amended as to read: 'Adultery on the part of either the hus-
band or the wife.'...

Section 14. That the statutory laws of the United States
not locally inapplicable, except as hereinbefore or hereinaf-
ter otherwise provided, shall have the same force and effect
in Porto Rico as in the United States, except the internal-
revenue laws, which, in view of the provisions of section
three, shall not have force and effect in Porto Rico.

Section 15. That the legislative authority hereinafter
provided shall have power by due enactment to amend, alter,
modify, or repeal any law or ordinance, civil or criminal,
continued in force by this Act, as it may from time to time
see fit.

Section 16. That all judicial process shall run in the
name of 'United States of America, ss: the President of the
United States;' and all criminal or penal prosecutions in the
local courts shall be conducted in the name and by the author-
ity of 'The People of Porto Rico'; and all officials authorized
by this Act shall before entering upon the duties of their re-
spective offices take an oath to support the Constitution of
the United States and the laws of Porto Rico.

Section 17. That the official title of the chief execu-
tive officer shall be 'The Governor of Porto Rico.' He shall
be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and con-
sent of the Senate; he shall hold his office for a term of
four years and until his successor is chosen and qualified un-
less sooner removed by the President; he shall reside in Porto
Rico during his official incumbency, and shall maintain his
office at the seat of government; he may grant pardons and re-
prieves, and remit fines and forfeitures for offenses against
the laws of Porto Rico, and respites for offenses against the
laws of the United States, until the decision of the President
can be ascertained; he shall commission all officers that he
may be authorized to appoint, and may veto any legislation enacted, as hereinafter provided; he shall be the commander in chief of the militia, and shall at all times faithfully execute the laws, and he shall in that behalf have all the powers of governors of the Territories of the United States that are not locally inapplicable; and he shall annually, and at such other times as he may be required, make official report of the transactions of the government in Porto Rico, through the Secretary of State, to the President of the United States: Provided, That the President may, in his discretion, delegate and assign to him such executive duties and functions as may in pursuance with law be so delegated and assigned.

Section 18. That there shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for the period of four years, unless sooner removed by the President, a secretary, an attorney-general, a treasurer, and auditor, a commissioner of the interior, and a commissioner of education, each of whom shall reside in Porto Rico during his official incumbency and have the powers and duties hereinafter provided for them, respectively, and who, together with five other persons of good repute, to be also appointed by the President for a like term of four years, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall constitute an official council, at least five of whom shall be native inhabitants of Porto Rico, and, in addition to the legislative duties hereinafter imposed upon them as a body, shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as are hereinafter provided for them, respectively, and who shall have power to employ all necessary deputies and assistants for the proper discharge of their duties as such officials and as such executive council.

Section 27. That all local legislative powers hereby granted shall be vested in a legislative assembly which shall consist of two houses; one the executive council, as hereinbefore constituted, and the other a house of delegates, to consist of thirty-five members elected biennially by the qualified voters as hereinafter provided; and the two houses thus constituted shall be designated 'The legislative assembly of Porto Rico.'

Section 28. That for the purposes of such elections Porto Rico shall be divided by the executive council into seven districts, composed of contiguous territory and as nearly equal as may be in population, and each district shall be entitled to five members of the house of delegates.
Section 29. That the first election for delegates shall be held on such date and under such regulations as to ballots and voting as the executive council may prescribe. ... At such elections all the citizens of Porto Rico shall be allowed to vote who have been bona fide residents for one year and who possess the other qualifications of voters under the laws and military orders in force on the first day of March, 1900, subjects to such modifications and additional qualifications and such regulations and restrictions as to registration as may be prescribed by the executive council....

Section 32. That the legislative authority herein provided shall extend to all matters of a legislative character not locally inapplicable, including power to create, consolidate, and reorganize the municipalities, so far as may be necessary, and to provide and repeal laws and ordinances therefor; and also the power to alter, amend, modify, and repeal any and all laws and ordinances of every character now in force in Porto Rico, or any municipality or district thereof, not inconsistent with the provisions hereof: Provided, however, That all grants of franchise, rights, and privileges or concessions of a public or quasi-public nature shall be made by the executive council, with the approval of the governor, and all franchises granted in Porto Rico shall be reported to Congress, which hereby reserves the power to annul or modify the same.

Section 33. That the judicial power shall be vested in the courts and tribunals of Porto Rico as already established and now in operation, including municipal courts....

Section 34. That Porto Rico 'shall constitute a judicial district to be called the district of Porto Rico.' The President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint a district judge, a district attorney, and a marshall for said district, each for a term of four years, unless sooner removed by the President. The district court for the said district shall be called the district court of the United States for Porto Rico.

Section 35. That writs of error and appeals from the final decisions of the supreme court of Porto Rico and the district court of the United States shall be allowed and may be taken to the Supreme Court of the United States in the same manner and under the same regulations and in the same cases as from the supreme courts of the Territories of the United States....
Section 39. That the qualified voters of Porto Rico shall, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, anno Domini nineteen hundred, and every two years thereafter, choose a resident commissioner to the United States, who shall be entitled to official recognition as such by all Departments, upon presentation to the Department of State of a certificate of election of the governor of Porto Rico, and who shall be entitled to a salary, payable monthly by the United States, at the rate of five thousand dollars per annum: Provided, That no person shall be eligible to such election who is not a bona fide citizen of Porto Rico, who is not thirty years of age, and who does not read and write the English language.

Section 40. That a commission, to consist of three members, at least one of whom shall be a native citizen of Porto Rico, shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to compile and revise the laws of Porto Rico; also the various codes of procedure and systems of municipal government now in force, and to frame and report such legislation as may be necessary to make a simple, harmonious, and economical government, establish justice and secure its prompt and efficient administration, inaugurate a general system of education and public instruction, provide buildings and funds therefor, equalize and simplify taxation and make all other provisions that may be necessary to secure and extend the benefits of a republican form of government to all the inhabitants of Porto Rico.1

1 The New Larned History, 6842-6843.
Appendix B

Father Maas Tells about Economic and Social Conditions in Porto Rico

Bayamon, P. R.
March 12, 1945

Dear Sister Mary Hyacinth,

I received your letter in answer to the article in The Torch some days ago.... There are so many opinions, and when you read books or magazine articles about Puerto Rico, you don't know what to think. Lately there was an article in the Catholic Digest written by a religious of Notre Dame. Many things are true, but many are exaggerated. If everybody were living in town, it would be easier to make statistics. But the majority are living in the country sections, where exact supervision is impossible; for instance, nobody can tell you or me how many Puerto Ricans there are, as many children are not registered. In many towns registration books are eaten away by the termite. Out of a 100 people who come to the priest's house for baptismal certificates, at least 40% cannot be found. Were they baptized or not? We do not know. Perhaps the godfathers spent the dollar they had to pay on other things, and turned back to the country hut telling the father and mother that the child was baptized. Who knows?

Now answering briefly to your questions: People in the rural districts are able to secure the necessary things for life if you understand by that: a cup of black coffee in the morning, and some rice, beans, and unripe bananas for the rest of the day. That is absolutely necessary for living. They gather dry wood for the fire to cook the meals. They use a candle for the evening when it is dark. Clothing is poor, but they do not feel unhappy about that. When they really have nothing, the neighbors take care of them. But when you speak about necessary things of life, and you mean all the kind of comforts we have: a decent house, chairs, table, at least a bed for each two people, pot and pans for cooking, a toilet, meat at dinner or supper time, etc., etc., surely they are not able to procure these.
The majority of the children do attend school, although there are thousands of children for whom there is no room. Many a youngster stays home after attending school for two or three years only.

'Have the Puerto Ricans realized many benefits from the United States since 1898?'

American priests were able to come in, and we from Holland, too. There are many Redemptorists, Capuchins, Holy Ghost Fathers, and we Hollanders are twenty-four. They take care of parish schools, high schools, academies, etc. And those Catholic Schools are the best on the island. Nowadays in several places there are six, seven, or ten priests where formerly only one priest used to be - places as Aguadilla, Arecibo, Mayaguez, Bayamon, etc., of more than 40,000 souls each. That is the only benefit that I can see.

The spirit of religion is going backwards because Protestantism is favored by the States, bad films, bad reviews, weeklies, etc., the bad influence of the University, the textbooks of the public schools which are anti-Catholic; and so I could go on.

The States government made many good roads on the island. Now it is possible for the country people to come to town more easily; but now they learn every bad thing, too, they see in town. So what is the influence of the United States? Good or bad?

About marriage: Half of the Catholics do not live as they should - civil, or Protestant marriage, or not marriage at all.

There is no hatred to some race. Black and white are both children of God. That is something they certainly did not learn from the States.

Devotedness to the Catholic faith: Of the 25,000 under our jurisdiction only 3,000 attend Mass on Sunday in town and chapels. The rest are either Protestant or children under seven years of age. It is impossible to estimate correctly; but it is something....

Sincerely in St. Dominic,
Father Marcolino Maas, O.P.
Appendix C

Father Maas Gives His Opinion Concerning Independence for Puerto Rico and Other Things

Bayamon, P. R.
April 12, 1945

Dear Sister Mary Hyacinth,

...... Now about the questions in your last letter. About independence: Some want to have it; others do not. Sugar men and industrialists do not want it. They are afraid that the United States will not ask for sugar any more. Those who have to live from the United States government, and have a good salary, do not want it either. People of the lower classes and the University people are most in favor of it. That was the reason that during the latest elections in November almost three-fourths of the island voted for the Popular Party as they were told that independence was in the program of the Party; but up to now the president of the Party, Munoz Marin, has kept his silence on the subject. Now and then they have an independence congress. The first one was held right after the elections; thousands and thousands of people were present. The result? Nothing. So many are in favor of it, but many are against it.

For the sake of the Catholic religion perhaps it would be better to be independent. Much corruption comes from propaganda of the States. But if independence means that every foreign priest has to be thrown out, Puerto Rico will have only about seventy native priests (and some of these are very old) for a population of 2,000,000, and no Sisters for Catholic Schools.

Economically things would go wrong as there are almost no industries on the island.

As Puerto Rico has a key position in the Atlantic Ocean, with an excellent harbor in San Juan, I don't think the States will give it up so soon.

That people do not receive the Sacrament of Matrimony because priests require so large an offering for performing the
ceremony is a plain lie. Out of a thousand, perhaps there is one case of this kind. Many times the judge charges more than the Catholic priest; and in spite of this, Catholics live only in civil marriage. Many people do not live according to the law because they have no religion and think that concubinage is the same as matrimony. Others do not marry because they know that once married they cannot divorce. Again others do not marry the first years because they want to know if the girl is a good housewife or not. Those first years many times last almost the while life, after which they come to marry. It is a fact that many unmarried people, when you ask why they did not marry, answer: 'Because the priest charged too much.' But I think that is just a pretext to have the wedding done for nothing. Many people spend a whole lot of money for the celebration, dresses, cakes, etc., and hardly want to spend a couple of dollars to support the priest. The less they can give to the priest, the better. Society marriages pay $20 to the church and spend hundreds of dollars in celebration. We never ask more than the couple is able to give once in their lives on the occasion of a wedding. Poor people pay $2.00, and those who have nothing, are helped for nothing. There is no practical faith here almost, so there is no high esteem for the Sacraments. That is all.

Funds for education come from Puerto Rico. The budget for education is every year millions and millions, but it seems insufficient to provide enough school buildings. The United States has nothing to do with it. Only the chief of the department is appointed by Washington; however, the United States wants to know and to have supervision over the things taught in the schools. Unfortunately! When you see the textbooks - all propaganda material against Catholicism - you wonder how boys and girls keep on the right way; or it would be better to say: some girls, because almost all the boys get lost for the religion.

In many country districts there are hundreds of children without schooling because teachers do not want to go there. It is far away, bad roads, and they have to stay there the whole week and spend more than half of the money they get for teaching for lodging and meals, horses, and cars....

Sincerely in St. Dominic,

Father Marcolino Maas, O.P.
Appendix D

Sister M. Dolores, O.S.F. Tells of Language Difficulties

Colegio San Antonio
Rio Piedras, P. R.
April 29, 1945

Dear Sister M. Hyacinth,

Regarding the language medium in teaching: Up until the fifth grade all subjects, except English, are taught in Spanish. This means that our Sisters teaching in the kindergarten and in grades one to six have to have a good hold on Spanish. It takes a Sister intended for these grades about two years to adjust herself. In our fifth grade we encounter a deal of language difficulty, especially if the children have not been in our lower grades. The year of transition is hard on them but they come through fine. From the fifth grade up we teach all subjects in English excepting religion. If the high school Sisters are able they give religion in Spanish. The instructions given by the priests are in Spanish, too. At an assembly, if the English is clearly spoken, the majority from seventh grade up can grasp it.

Parents in no wise resent our presence here. In fact, we have most of our enrollment due to the fact that we are Americans where their children will learn American English rather than that we have a Catholic school. I'll add here that teachers cannot do their best even in the teaching of English unless they know the Spanish language because no bond can exist until the teacher begins to understand the child, who usually wants to express himself in his own tongue. One cannot understand the Puerto Rican mind if he does not know their language.

A very large number are unable to attend schools. I have not at hand any specific numbers to give you, but I have heard it said that only 50 per cent of the children are able to attend, while of this number only 50 per cent attend a whole-day session. To accommodate more children they have 'interlocking.' The morning session runs from 8:00 to 12:40. At one o'clock another shift enters the same buildings with a
different principal and a different body of teachers. (Public schools). Classes run to 4:30 and 5:00; perhaps later. You can imagine the inconveniences that result, but it is a partial solution to the problem of too many children and not enough schools and teachers. There can be no compulsory education; on the contrary, parents are so eager to get their children in that they beg the teacher, and they even provide, in some instances, a make-shift desk (a box sometimes) in order to get a 'seat' in school. The fear of losing their 'seat' permanently is a good deterrent in some cases of misconduct. ... It isn't a case of forcing a child into school but of going to any extreme to get the child in.

Where communities can staff the entire school they do so. If they have native vocations, these members are able to teach Spanish; if not, seculars are engaged....

Yours sincerely in Francis and Dominic,

Sister M. Dolores, O.S.F.
Appendix E

Dr. Osuna Discusses the Attitude of the People toward Independence

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
Rio Piedras, P. R.

Sister Mary Hyacinth, O.P.
St. Rita Convent
6240 South Washtenaw Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

November 9, 1944

My dear Sister Hyacinth:

... Personally I should tell you that due to many circumstances the Puerto Rico problem has become very complicated in many ways. The people in Puerto Rico have been divided in their opinion. It is interesting that the elections, day before yesterday, showed a large majority vote in favor of the program of the 'Popular Democratic Party.' Although this party is made up of all kinds of people with varied political beliefs, yet the result of the elections shows that perhaps the people are getting together. Whether the program of this party is the best thing for the island or not, it is to be hoped that the majority of the people are acting together on something, which is a good sign from the point of view of popular government.

From the literature which you will receive you will notice that the progress of Puerto Rico since 1898 has been very marked in every way, social, economic, agricultural, educational, etc. Some extremists would have us believe that progress is fictitious, but those of us who have observed the course of events for the last fifty years feel that it is most real.

With reference to the attitude of the people toward independence, I may say that this issue has never been put up to the people for a decision. The members of the Independent Party make a lot of noise and, apparently, they are numerous. They may be a majority or a minority, nobody knows. It will not be known until the issue is put up to the people for them to decide. Some of our people believe that we should maintain our union with the United States permanently, having
statehood as the ultimate goal; while others believe in breaking our ties with the United States entirely and constituting ourselves into a sovereign, independent republic. As to what group is in the majority, it is still to be found out. I do not feel that I should even venture an opinion, since this particular problem is so vague and delicate, and my opinion may be misleading...

Very sincerely yours,

J. J. Osuna
Dean Emeritus
Appendix F

Dr. Osuna Tells of Progress in Puerto Rico since 1898

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
Rio Piedras, P. R.

January 19, 1945

Sister Mary Hyacinth, O.P.
St. Rita Convent
6240 South Washtenaw Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

My dear Sister Hyacinth:

... You are right in surmising that the rapid progress we have had in Puerto Rico has been done greatly by our own efforts, but that does not mean that the United States has not done a great deal for Puerto Rico. Personally I feel that the contribution that the United States has made to Puerto Rico is incalculable. But I also feel that the United States could have done still more than they have. If we have the progress that we have it is because the United States has inspired us to achieve that progress. Since 1932 the United States has done a great deal for Puerto Rico financially....

We Puerto Ricans are inclined to be passionate in the expression of our ideas and sometimes we neglect to give credit where credit is due.

Very sincerely yours,

J. J. Osuna
Dean Emeritus
Reverend and dear Sister Hyacinth:

I can only write briefly in reply to your letter of recent date concerning the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico since 1898.

In general, I should say that during the last 47 years Puerto Rico has made great progress, material progress, under the American flag. It would be impossible to come into the orbit of American influence and escape entirely its effects. Whether Puerto Rico has made all the progress that one had the right to expect under such beneficent political guardianship is questionable and each one must answer for himself. Personally, I don't think it has. Congress has neglected the Island. There has been no clear policy for its development. In fact, one may well ask whether Congress has ever realized the obligation incurred by the nation when the cession of Puerto Rico was demanded as a condition for the granting of the armistice which put an end to hostilities in the Spanish-American War. The cession was demanded in lieu of an indemnity which, it was assumed, Spain would not be able to pay. Whether this transfer of one million people from one sovereignty to another, without their consent, was in harmony with American principles, you can answer as well as anyone. The excuse was given that the Puerto Ricans would fare better under the American flag. When the Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris, the national obligation with respect to the welfare of Puerto Rico became binding. Congress has never taken that
obligation very seriously. And it is a pity, for the Treaty of Paris laid the fate of the people of Puerto Rico right in the hands of the Congress of the United States.

No one in his senses could deny that great progress has been made in education. And yet one half of the children of school age in the Island never get any schooling, for there is no place for them. This condition is unique under the American flag. Great progress has been made in sanitation. The fact that the population has doubled during the period is prima facie evidence of that. Whether the people as a whole are healthier is highly questionable. Look at the death rate for tuberculosis. The people are undernourished. Take the land problem. Congress dimly perceived in 1900 that unless something was done, American corporations would buy up the best lands and create a serious food problem for the people. The 500-acre limitation was incorporated in the Organic Act. It was an empty gesture, for until 1940 no effort was made to enforce it. I recommend this problem to your attention. Private enterprise functioned in the colonial possession without let or hindrance, and today the economic condition of the people of Puerto Rico worries everybody. During the last 47 years, the few rich have become richer and the many poor have become poorer. Had we had in the economic sphere the same control that we had in the political field, things might have developed differently. We were not given complete political freedom because we were supposed to be inexperienced and immature politically. But we were granted the full blessings of free enterprise, which in a colonial possession means nothing less than the right of investing capital to get all the trade can bear. Being a loyal American citizen, I am not inclined to be too hard on the shortcomings of our nation. Let's put it down to inexperience in colonial administration, which may be a national blessing in disguise.

The result of this neglect on the part of Congress and the free play of free enterprise in a colonial possession has been the development of a highly artificial economy which has benefited invested capital to the detriment of the people. The remedy is diversification, as much industrialization as we can get. The program under Governor Tugwell seeks that.
The Island is divided between those who want statehood and those who prefer independence. Right now there is no indication here on the Continent that anyone seriously favors statehood for Puerto Rico. The choice appears to be between continuing to be an insular possession or becoming a full-fledged member of the American family of nations. I should say, therefore, that today those who favor independence seem to be in the majority, for very obvious reasons. Independence without free access to the American market would mean economic death to Puerto Rico. Consequently, those who favor independence are at this moment trying to write into the independence bill a period of re-adjustment during which the Island would receive special tariff treatment that would enable it to adapt its economy to its new political status.

I trust these remarks will be of some assistance to you.

Cordially yours,

Jose Padin
APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Hyacinth Adelson, O.P. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

April 30, 1946
Signature of Adviser