

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
PUERTO RICO



SPEAKER'S ROOM

San Juan, January 9, 1914.

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor,
San Juan.

Dear Governor:-

I take the liberty to herewith enclose you a letter which I received from the Delegate Hon. Arturo Lluberas, recommending Mr. Ramon Dapena, of Ponce, to cover the vacancy in the Commission of Irrigation.

Mr. Lluberas is the owner of great sugar cane plantations of the country and a person worthy of great confidence.

I also personally know Mr. Dapena and can assure you that I consider him a very capable man for the discharge of said position.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, written over a horizontal line.

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Enero 3 de 1914.

Sr.Dn.José de Diego

San Juan.

Mi estimado amigo :

La renuncia de Dn.Carlos Tero deja vacante un puesto en la Comisión de Riego de la costa sur, al que aspira el Lcdo.Dn.Ramón Dapena, de Ponce, elemento distinguido de n/ colectividad y muy capaz para desempeñarlo á conciencia.

Si no tiene Ud.compromiso anterior, y puede complacerme presentando y sosteniendo ante el Gobernador su candidatura, le quedaré reconocido.

Dentro de varios dias estaré en esa para el comienzo de las tareas legislativas.

Le desea salud y muchas satisfacciones en el nuevo año, su affme.amigo y S.S.

Arturo Lluberas,

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HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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SPEAKER'S ROOM

San Juan, March 17, 1914.

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor of Porto Rico,
San Juan.

Dear Governor:-

For the third time and after a long discussion, the House approved yesterday the Workman's Compensation Act for accidents arising from hazardous occupations, and the Bill is now in the Executive Council.

Since many days this Bill had long debates in the House, the newspapers having fully informed of the matter, no protest in the public opinion having arisen, and on the contrary, the press and the people applauded the just provisions which protected hundred thousands of workmen, which constitute the immense majority of our Island.

After the Bill having been approved in the House, during the regular session, Mr. Hartzell had profusely circulate a printed letter among the industrials and merchants of the Island, of which I herewith enclose you a copy.

Mr. Hartzell represents the only Insurance Company for accidents of work, which exists in the Island, stating that if the Bill should become law, the Company would close its business in Porto Rico or raise the rates of the policies of insurance.

As you will understand, Mr. Governor, it is ri-

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diculous that an Insurance Company for accidents of work opposes itself to a law, which favouring the right of the laborers to compensation, of course, also favours the increase of the insurance, which is the Company's business.

On the other hand, if the Company increases the rate of the policies, it would be best for it, not to tell same until the Law is approved and then make its business.

Analogous Laws to the Bill approved by the House exist in 41 States of the Union and instead of paralyzing the business of the Insurance companies for accidents of work, it has just fomented the multiplication of the companies.

Mr. Hartzell only wants to impel a false commotion of protest against the Bill, and this action can only be due to two reasons: Either Mr. Hartzell does not really defend the company's interests, but the selfish interests of certain employers, who resist any compensation to the laborers: or Mr. Hartzell is afraid that, if the Bill is approved, that many american and stranger companies will extend their business to Porto Rico, and will establish a competition and destroy the monopoly which the company represented by Mr. Hartzell exercises now in the Island.

As you will see Mr. Hartzell's letter only presents three arguments against the Bill: 1st That the provisions of the Bill try to diminish the power of the Courts: 2nd That the contributory negligence of the laborer is not ob-

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served, in order to exempt the employer from responsibility:
3rd That the Bill confers too many attributes to the Chief of
the Bureau of Labor.

The first objection is absolutely destroyed
by only examining the Section 25 of the Bill, which permits the
employer or the laborer to appeal the decision of the Board of
Arbitrators to the Courts, in any case.

The argument of the contributory negligence
of the workmen is already over twenty years eliminated from the
legislation of all the civilized countries.

I have now at sight the Message of the Presi-
dent of the United States to the Congress, in the year 1912,
which composes two large volumes with a full information about
the matter: and from the page 275 of Volume II, I copy the fol-
lowing paragraphs:-

"Gradually since 1884 the leading countries
of Europe have wholly abandoned the "negligence" principle in
dealing with the disability or death of an employee due to work
accident. The order of the adoption of these changes is as fol-
lows:"

"Germany, 1884; Austria, 1887; Norway, 1894;
Finland, 1895; Great Britain, 1897; Denmark, 1898; Italy, 1898;
France, 1898; Spain, 1900; Netherlands, 1901; Greece, 1901; Swe-
den, 1901; Luxemburg, 1902; Russia, 1903; Belgium, 1903; Hunga-
ry, 1907."

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" The foundation for this new principle.- The declared bases upon which such legislation has been justified were from the outset as follows: "

" 1.- Damages due to work accidents are more or less uniform and unavoidable and therefore an element of the cost of conducting business, and as such should enter into the price of the product and be paid by the consumer. "

" 2.- The State, i. e., the entire public, is interested that compensation be paid in such amount and in such manner that families will be supported decently and not be pauperized or rendered criminal; for the great public has the bill to pay in any event and should pay it in the fairest and most direct way and not through charity or correction. " "

I also have at sight the document 419 of the United States Senate, in 1914, Workmen's Compensation Report upon operation of State Laws.

From this document it results that a similar law to our Bill exists in 41 States and with relation to the question of the contributory negligence, appears this chapter on page 17:

"Defenses abrogated under elective Acts.- Under an elective compensation act an employer is given his choice of accepting the act or operating under the liability law with certain long recognized defenses removed. These defenses are

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Commission thought it more equitable that the employer should have a representative in the Board, another the workman, and as chairman the Chief of the Bureau of Labor, who is, according to law, appointed by the Director of the Department of Labor, Charities and Correction, with the approval of the Governor.

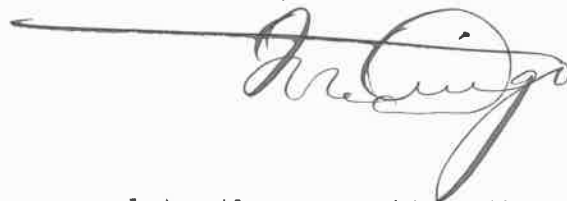
Nevertheless, if anybody desires that the third member, the Chairman of the Board, should be appointed by the Governor, with the approval of the Executive Council or the Senate, I would have no inconvenience to accept it.

Our Bill is inspired in the present american legislation in the matter, responds to the principles proclaimed by the President Wilson and gives to 800,000 portorican laborers a just protection of which they are in need at present.

I know, Governor, your absolute democratic convincement and hope that you will readily help us for the approval of the Bill, without taking notice of the protest inspired in the error or in the selfishness.

I am willing to answer now any other objection, which may arise against the Bill and remain,

Yours very sincerely,



P. S.- In regard to the opposition that will be made to the bill by virtue of the action of Mr. Hartzell, I shall relate a curious incident of which I was informed last

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night by Mr. Paniagua, the Director of the Commercial Bank.

A group of persons who arrived from the Island called on Mr. Paniagua and invited him to appear before you to protest against the bill. Mr. Paniagua asked them the reason for the opposition and was informed that the same was based on the question of contributory negligence. Mr. Paniagua replied that he had studied the bill and agreed to the fact that the working-man's negligence did not exempt the employer from liability. Then he again asked them if they had any other objection to make. They said they had other objections, but that the truth was that they had not read the bill and that they intended to go to the office of the Secretary of the House to obtain a copy. Mr. Paniagua finally refused to accompany said gentlemen, who protested against a bill they had not read.

March 19, 1914.

My dear Mr. de Diego:

Since my interview last night with you and Mr. Barceló I have read the enclosed clipping from the "Porto Rico Progress", and of course I know nothing as to the accuracy of the statements, but I am writing to say simply that if General Mc Intyre and I undertake to guide the action of Congress upon so important and difficult and much controverted a question as the form of citizenship to be granted to the Porto Ricans, it is a heavy responsibility and we want to feel sure of our ground.

I would suggest that when you send me the copies of the resolutions which you read to me last night, that you send me also a letter, signed by yourself and Mr. Barceló and such other influential leaders of the Unionist Party as you think best, pledging yourselves personally, to the following proposition: In case individual citizenship be granted by Congress, that you will all personally use your influence with your party to the end that free individual action on the part of all Porto Ricans shall not be interfered with by any party action, and that the party press and the party leaders through public speeches shall cooperate with all of us who are trying to secure a free expression of public opinion through the acceptance

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of individual citizenship.

I desire a letter of this sort to send to General Mc Intyre so that he may counteract before the Senate Committee any efforts that may be made to convince them that the Porto Ricans do not want individual citizenship and would not give it a fair chance if it were granted to them.

I am sure you understand that I personally have no objections to collective citizenship and my only reason for opposing it is that the other form would be easier for the Porto Ricans and more acceptable on the whole to all the Porto Ricans; and I am anxious to convince the Senate Committee that in this opinion I am correct.

With much esteem and sincere good wishes, I am,

Yours respectfully,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego, Speaker,
House of Delegates,
San Juan, Porto Rico.

March 19, 1914.

My dear Mr. de Diego:

Since my interview last night with you and Mr. Barceló I have read the enclosed clipping from the "Porto Rico Progress", and of course I know nothing as to the accuracy of the statements, but I am writing to say simply that if General Mc Intyre and I undertake to guide the action of Congress upon so important and difficult and much controverted a question as the form of citizenship to be granted to the Porto Ricans, it is a heavy responsibility and we want to feel sure of our ground.

I would suggest that when you send me the copies of the resolutions which you read to me last night, that you send me also a letter, signed by yourself and Mr. Barceló and such other influential leaders of the Unionist Party as you think best, pledging yourselves personally, to the following proposition: In case individual citizenship be granted by Congress, that you will all personally use your influence with your party to the end that free individual action on the part of all Porto Ricans shall not be interfered with by any party action, and that the party press and the party leaders through public speeches shall cooperate with all of us who are trying to secure a free expression of public opinion through the acceptance

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of individual citizenship.

I desire a letter of this sort to send to General Mc Intyre so that he may counteract before the Senate Committee any efforts that may be made to convince them that the Porto Ricans do not want individual citizenship and would not give it a fair chance if it were granted to them.

I am sure you understand that I personally have no objections to collective citizenship and my only reason for opposing it is that the other form would be easier for the Porto Ricans and more acceptable on the whole to all the Porto Ricans; and I am anxious to convince the Senate Committee that in this opinion I am correct.

With much esteem and sincere good wishes, I am,

Yours respectfully,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego, Speaker,
House of Delegates,
San Juan, Porto Rico.

March 19, 1914.

My dear Mr. de Diego:

Since my interview last night with you and Mr. Barceló I have read the enclosed clipping from the "Porto Rico Progress", and of course I know nothing as to the accuracy of the statements; but I am writing to say simply that if General Mc Intyre and I undertake to guide the action of Congress upon so important and difficult and much controverted a question as the form of citizenship to be granted to the Porto Ricans, it is a heavy responsibility and we want to feel sure of our ground.

I would suggest that when you send me the copies of the resolutions which you read to me last night, that you send me also a letter, signed by yourself and Mr. Barceló and such other influential leaders of the Unionist Party as you think best, pledging yourselves personally to the following proposition: In case individual citizenship be granted by Congress in the form embodied in the Shafroth bill, that you will all personally use your influence with your party to the end that free individual action on the part of all Porto Ricans shall not be interfered with by any party action of the party which you may represent, and that the party press and the party leaders through

(19 Mar. 14)

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their public speeches will cooperate with all of us who are trying to secure a free expression of public opinion on the acceptance of individual citizenship, as provided in the Shafroth bill.

I desire a letter of this sort to send to General Mc Intyre so that he may counteract before the Senate Committee any efforts that may be made to convince them that the Porto Ricans do not want individual citizenship and would not give it a fair chance if it were granted to them.

I am sure you understand that I personally have no objections to collective citizenship and my only reason for opposing it is that the other form would be easier for the Porto Ricans and more acceptable on the whole to all of them; and I am anxious to convince the Senate Committee that in this opinion I am correct.

With much esteem and sincer good wishes, I am,

Yours respectfully,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego, Speaker,

House of Delegates,

San Juan, Porto Rico.

C O P Y

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

PORTO RICO

Speaker's Room.

San Juan, March 24, 1914.

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor of Porto Rico,
San Juan.

My dear Mr. Governor:

Referring again to your last letter, I copy the resolutions approved in a private session on the 18th instant, which resolutions essentially coincide with others adopted on the 9th by the Central Committee of the Union of Porto Rico.

1.- That as a form of autonomic evolution inspired by democratic principles, the bill introduced by Mr. Muñoz Rivera in the House of Representatives satisfactorily answers the aspirations of the House of Delegates.

2.- To declare that although the House is opposed to any measure tending to weaken the subsistence of Porto Rican citizenship in the future, it considers that the formula of individual american citizenship, such as provided in the Shafroth bill, is acceptable, because said formula leaves Porto Ricans at liberty to act, and is not incompatible with any of the country's ideals.

3.- To declare that the granting to the Governor of the absolute power of veto over the Legislature of Porto Rico, should be opposed for the reason that it

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is in conflict with every principle of republican government and with the doctrine sustained by the Democratic Party.

4.- That, notwithstanding, the Shafroth bill noticeably improves our political organization, distinctly maintains our personality, and is a step forward on the road of our political evolution.

As I told you in my previous letter, after having received your favor of the 19th of March and after informing Mr. Barceló of same, he convened the Unionist Central Committee for a special meeting, in order to discuss the matter.

In said Meeting, which was held yesterday, the following resolutions were approved:

A.- We shall not take on hostile attitude against the American citizenship as provided by the Shafroth Bill; nevertheless, in our political campaigning we shall maintain in its whole integrity the present platform of the Union of Porto Rico.

B.- And within these lines, the Government of Porto Rico may rely upon the absolute effort of the Unionist Party to establish a just, orderly and liberal system of government in accordance with the principles of the great Democratic Party.

This letter is also signed by Mr. Barceló, as President of the Unionist Party, and the resolutions contained in this letter show the opinion of the leaders of our Party.

I take this opportunity to render you my thanks for your valuable labor done in favor of a liberal change in our political regime, and remain,

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) Ant^o B. Barceló.

(Sgd.) José de Diego.

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
PUERTO RICO

SPEAKER'S ROOM

San Juan, April 2, 1914.

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor of Porto Rico,
San Juan.

Dear Governor:-

I take the liberty to introduce to you Mr. Alfredo Amy, a respectable gentlemen of Guayama, who desires to request from you a small indult of two days of jail.

This gentleman was summoned by the District Court of Guayama in order to assist to a trial, but being sick he could not do it, and was condemned for contempt to \$200.00 of fine and two days of jail.

Mr. Amy is ready to pay the fine and also that the two days of jail be commuted for some dollars of fine, but he is a man who has never been proceeded criminally and he is now greatly afflicted that he should go to jail for the first time in his life.

I present this matter to your high discretion and justice and beg you to give same your kind attention, as soon as possible, as the sentence must be executed to-morrow.

Very truly yours,



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April 3, 1914.

My dear Mr. de Diego:

Your letter embodying the resolution adopted by the House of Delegates at the conclusion of their recent session was duly received. I assure you that I greatly appreciate the kind expression of confidence and cooperation and personal good will contained in this resolution and am greatly gratified at its receipt and shall preserve and cherish the memory of it always.

I desire to express in return my own appreciation of the work of the House of Delegates and of its Speaker and leader in both the regular session and the special session which has just closed.

I am quite satisfied with the record made by Legislature and have none but pleasant memories of my own connection with their work. I hope that in the future sessions of the House of Delegates I shall be able to renew the pleasant personal relations that I have had with yourself as Speaker and with the members of the House.

With sincere esteem for yourself and all the members of the House of Delegates, I am,

Cordially your friend,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego,
Speaker, House of Delegates,
San Juan, Porto Rico.

August 10, 1914.

My dear Mr. de Diego:

It is with infinite regret that I find myself this morning compelled by great pressure of business in the office, to decline your courteous invitation to attend the luncheon to be given to the Officers of the Argentine vessels now in our harbor. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to be present on this occasion and show my friendly and hospitable spirit toward these visitors.

I would appreciate it if you would convey to them the expression of my feeling toward them and their prosperous and progressing country, and of my great personal regret not to be able to be with them and you upon this occasion.

With every assurance of respect, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego,

San Juan, Porto Rico.

February 17, 1915.

My dear Mr. de Diego:

Yours of the 16th instant, with reference to a possible vacancy in the Irrigation Commission, has been received.

I have not yet been informed of any vacancy in that Commission except the one caused by the death of Mr. Teridor, and this vacancy is, according to the law, to be filled by election on the part of the water users.

In case there should occur a vacancy which the Governor has the power to fill, I shall take under careful consideration the name of Mr. Vicente Usera that you have suggested.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego, Speaker,
House of Delegates of Porto Rico,
San Juan, Porto Rico.

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HOUSE OF DELEGATES
PUERTO RICO

SPEAKER'S ROOM

San Juan, February 16, 1915.

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor of Porto Rico,
San Juan.

My dear Governor:-

I have been informed that there exists a vacancy in the Irrigation Commission, and I desire to present to your consideration for the appointment, Mr. Vicente Usera, of Ponce.

Mr. Usera has been one of the most distinguished members of the House of Delegates, he is a very intelligent, honest and active person, of great scientific knowledge. He possesses valuable properties and is highly qualified for the position.

As you know, the Unionist Party initiated and sustained in the Legislature all the Bills for the Irrigation Service, which you in your last Message to the Legislature very justly qualified as a monumental work. Nevertheless, all or nearly all the employees in the Irrigation Service are republicans, and if in any way the aid of the Unionist Party for the execution of the work, may be of any value, I beg you to appoint Mr. Usera to cover the vacancy in the Commission, and I assure you that you will obtain one of the best quali-

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(16 Feb 15)

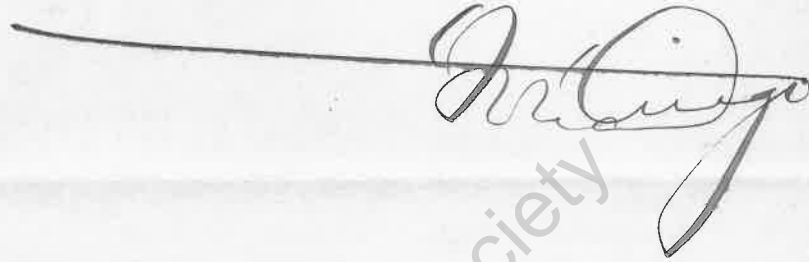
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
PUERTO RICO

SPEAKER'S ROOM

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fied persons in Porto Rico for the said position.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. L. ...", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is written in dark ink and is somewhat stylized.

The Filson Historical Society

17 de marzo de 1916.

Señor:-

He recibido su carta de fecha 15 del corriente solicitando informes respecto a los procedimientos gubernativos seguidos con motivo de la situación existente en Arecibo; asimismo carta del Secretario de la Cámara de Delegados relativa al mismo asunto.

En contestación tengo el honor de manifestarle que en la noche del 12 del mes actual el Jefe de Policía fué enviado a Arecibo con instrucciones generales para tomar las medidas que, después de un estudio cuidadoso, estimare a su juicio necesarias para restablecer el orden público y la tranquilidad en el distrito de Arecibo, interiniendo lo menos posible en el movimiento de los trabajadores en huelga. No se le dieron instrucciones especiales a no ser la de impedir una gran manifestación que se había anunciado para el 13 de marzo en el barrio de Campo Alegre donde había ocurrido recientemente una grave perturbación que dió por resultado el derramamiento de sangre.

He sido informado por el Jefe de Policía que después del día 13 de marzo no ha habido en el distrito de Arecibo ninguna clase de intervención por parte de

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la policía en el movimiento de los trabajadores; que no se han hecho ni rehusado peticiones para celebrar "meetings" o manifestaciones dentro o fuera de la ciudad, y que no han ocurrido desórdenes ni dificultades de ningún género.

Muy respetuosamente,

Gobernador.

Honorable José de Diego,

Presidente de la Cámara de Delegados,

San Juan, Puerto Rico.

CÁMARA DE DELEGADOS
DE PUERTO RICO



San Juan, P.R.-
Marzo 15 de 1916.-
Hon. Arthur Yager,
Gobernador,
San Juan, P.R.-

S e ñ o r :

Por la presente, ruego a Ud. que se sirva informar a la Cámara si es o nó cierto que en la ciudad de Arecibo, el día 13 de Marzo corriente, por orden gubernativa, ya procedente del Gobernador o del Jefe de Policía o cualquier otra autoridad ejecutiva, se han suspendido meetings y reuniones públicas, prohibiendo llevar banderas en los automóviles, y se ha ordenado la disolución de grupos de más de dos personas.-

No (1)
y (2)
No (3)

Este informe se solicita a instancia del suscribiente, de acuerdo con el inciso 15, Regla 11, del Reglamento de la Cámara. Y, con gracias anticipadas por su atención, quedo suyo,

Muy respetuosamente,

Presidente de la Cámara de
Delegados.-

JDD/LL

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CÁMARA DE DELEGADOS
DE PUERTO RICO

San Juan, P.R.-
Marzo 16 de 1916.-

S e ñ o r :

A solicitud del Hon. Delegado Sr. Julio Aybar, por orden del Hon. Presidente y de acuerdo con la Regla 11, párrafo 15 del Reglamento de la Cámara, tengo el honor de rogar a V. H. que se sirva informar "si es o nó cierto que en la ciudad de Arecibo, los días 14, 15 y 16 de marzo corriente, por orden Gubernativa, ya procedente del Gobernador o del Jefe de Policía, o cualquiera otra autoridad ejecutiva, se han suspendido meetings y reuniones públicas, prohibiendo llevar banderas en los automóviles y se ha ordenado la disolución de grupos de más de dos personas."

Muy RESPETUOSAMENTE,

José Manuel Rivera
Secretario de la Cámara
de Delegados.-

JM/LL

Hon. Gobernador de Pto-Rico,

San Juan, P.R.-

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
PORTO RICO

March 17, 1916.

Sir:-

Your letter of the 15th instant requesting information with reference to the proceedings of the ~~Government~~ ^{Government} ~~or the Chief of Police~~ in connection with the situation in the city of Arecibo, has been duly received, also a similar letter from the Secretary of the House of Delegates with reference to the same matter.

In reply I have the honor to state that the Chief of Police was sent to Arecibo upon the night of March 12th, with general instructions to take whatever measures seemed to be necessary in his judgment from careful study of the situation to restore public order and peace in the Arecibo District with as little interference with the movements of the striking laborers as was possible. No special instructions were given him except to prevent a large assembly which had been announced for March 13 to be held at the barrio Campo Alegre where an unfortunate disturbance had ^{recently} occurred resulting in bloodshed.

I am informed by the Chief of Police that since March 13 there has been in the Arecibo District no interference on the part of the police with the movements of the laborers of any sort and that no requests for meetings or demonstrations either within or without the city of Arecibo have been made or refused, and that there have been no dis-

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orders or difficulties whatever.

Very respectfully,

Governor.

Honorable José de Diego, Speaker,
House of Delegates,
San Juan, Porto Rico.

The Filson Historical Society

April 18, 1917.

My dear Mr. de Diego;

I was deeply touched by your letter of the 15th instant and sympathize keenly with you in your long and brave fight against the cruel suffering brought about by your illness. I admire greatly the pluck and courage you have shown, especially in this last decision to resort to the most heroic treatment in the hope of securing relief.

I have read carefully and with great interest your reiterated statement of your views and ideas for Porto Rico, and I cherish the hope that you will soon come out victorious in your struggle with disease and have an opportunity together with your party of cooperating with me in my effort to make the new government under the Jones bill successfully and triumphant.

I hope and pray that you may be immediately relieved of your suffering and speedily restored to health.

Sincerely your friend,

Governor.

Hon. José de Diego,
San Juan, Porto Rico.