

Mss.

A Munoz-Rivera, Luis.

Y13 Correspondence, 31 Dec. 1913 -

48 3 May 1916.

The Filson Historical Society

P. F.

House of Representatives U. S.
Washington, D. C.

Dec. 31, 1913

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor of Puerto Rico,
San Juan, P. R.

My dear Mr. Governor:

I take this occasion to extend to you my greetings for the New Year and to wish for you in this coming year the greatest possible success both personally and in the accomplishment of the utmost good in the high position which you are now filling. You have carried with you, to the Island, a spirit of loyalty and earnest endeavor which cannot fail and I look for the realization of great achievements and the solution of a difficult situation under your guiding hand.

In all your undertakings I know that you will have the cooperation of the House of Delegates and the native members of your Cabinet who seriously desire to help you. Governor Colton found them of the utmost aid to himself in his work and that they effectively combatted certain opposing elements and enacted much legislation that resulted in advancing the work of Education and Sanitation and of other Departments. He depended greatly upon their continuous and earnest effort to assist him in all his undertakings, and always

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found this dependence well placed, and I am sure that you, yourself, will find them an earnest, hard-working body, on which you can rely to assist you in accomplishing your high ideals; a body which will demonstrate to you the fitness of our people for a more liberal self government, which with your coöperation, we hope to accomplish in the near future.

To fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Mr. Wilson from the position of Commissioner of the Interior, I wish to recommend Mr. Manuel T. Saldaña. I know Mr. Saldaña well and have absolute confidence in him as a man fitted by training, in his profession as an engineer, and personally as an upright, talented capable man, well qualified in every respect to fulfill the arduous duties of this position in such a manner as to reflect credit to himself and to your Administration. I know that you would find him helpful in carrying through such policies as you may find for the best good of the most people.

And now, at the beginning of the New Year, I extend to you my sincere greeting and hope that the pages of the book now opened will be filled with the records of great achievements and blessings for our people through your wise and helpful efforts. With hearty wishes for your personal welfare and assurance of my high esteem, I beg to remain,

Cordially yours,

Manuel T. Saldaña

June 10, 1914.

Dear Sir:

I have refrained from writing to you about our matters in Congress because I know you have a tremendous volume of correspondence with others here which taxes your resources to the utmost.

I am writing now to say that I have direct information from Washington that our new organic act for Porto Rico still has a chance of passage at this session. It would be so much more convenient for us to have it passed at this session because of the date of our elections and other reasons; but I think that all of us who are interested in Porto Rico should exert ourselves to the utmost to have it passed now. I believe that if you would ask Mr. Jones to call up the bill called the "Jones Bill", as it now stands on the House calendar for consideration by the House, that the House would pass it. Senator Shafroth writes me that if it passes the House he can have it reported out by his Committee to the Senate with some modifications perhaps as to details. I am myself confident that if we could get it before the Senate I could persuade the President to aid us in putting it through that body. As to the details over which there is controversy, I am personally convinced that they are of comparatively little importance. The bill as a whole is far more liberal for

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Porto Rico than any bill ever yet proposed, and if we could get it passed in substantially its present form we could trust to the future to secure amendments as to minor details that might prove to be incorrect or inadvisable. It seems to me that the sensible thing for us all to do is to get as good a bill as we can now, and I think we have a chance to do it. I would be glad if you would write me your views about it at your earliest convenience.

The harbor project, which is of the utmost importance for San Juan, as you perhaps know, is in a good position before the Senate and I am hopeful of its ultimate passage. To my surprise some busy-bodies here have gotten up some opposition to that, but of course that seems inevitable for any thing of any sort that may ever be proposed in Congress for Porto Rico.

With best wishes for you, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Governor.

Hon. Luis Muñoz Rivera,
Resident Commissioner,
Washington, D. C.

July 1, 1914.

My dear Mr. Muñoz Rivera:

Your letter of recent date was duly received and carefully read. I note that you seem to be planning to maintain some amendments to the Jones Bill in the House. I think this, under the circumstances, would be a mistake, for although I believe that the House would accept these amendments, if they have time to do so, I am sure that they would cause debate and delay in the Senate, and at this stage delay means defeat. It was for this reason chiefly that I consented to the provision for the absolute veto of the Governor. As I told you, I do not think it of great practical importance, and personally I care nothing about it. But I believed then, and I believe now, that this provision is necessary to gain for the bill any chance of passage through the Senate, especially at this time. I am sure, therefore, that it is better for us to take the bill altogether and to get it passed just as it stands now before the House rather than attempt, as you say, to work out a great piece of legislation satisfactory to all parties and then have it postponed to the uncertainty of the short session next winter. So I hope you will consider this matter carefully and, if you can conscientiously, give your direct aid and influence along the lines suggested.

As to the harbor works here, I am glad to know

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it has such a good chance of passage. The engineers recommended the whole project carrying an expenditure of \$850,000 and the Senate Committee adopted their project providing \$400,000 appropriation for immediate use but implying that the rest would be appropriated when needed.

With best wishes, I am,

Yours very truly,

Governor.

Hon. Luis Muñoz Rivera,
Resident Commissioner,
Washington, D. C.

The Filson Historical Society

HOPE OF FILIPINOS PUT ON SIDETRACK

President Decides Not to Press
for Legislation at Present
Session of Congress.

SENATOR SIMMONS THINKS DEMOCRACY IN NO DANGER

Confident Party Majority Will Be
Returned to House at Elections
in November.

Representative Jones, chairman of the insular affairs committee of the House, conferred with President Wilson today on the Philippine bill, carrying into effect the plank of the Baltimore platform for a larger measure of self-government in the islands, being under consideration part of the time.

President Wilson stated to visitors today that he has given his approval to the main features of the bill, which has been practically completed by the committee and is about ready for introduction in the House. The President was frank enough to say, however, that he does not believe the bill will become law at this session of Congress.

Resident Commissioners Quezon and Earnshaw of the Philippines have conferred with the President several times in an endeavor to bring the influence of the administration to bear in favor of the enactment of the legislation at this session, but they have not found the President willing to place the Philippine bill ahead of more important legislation, which he has had trouble in getting to a satisfactory legislative position. They do not expect the bill to become law before the short session of Congress next winter, and probably not until the next long session, more than a year off.

House of Representatives U. S.
Washington, D. C.

July 10, 1914

My dear Governor:

I am in receipt of your esteemed letter of the 1st inst., in reference to the enactment of legislation for Porto Rico at this session, and I regret very much not to be able to agree with your suggestions as to the acceptance, without amendment, of the Jones Bill now pending before the House. As a question of principle, I am obliged, by my convictions, to insist on the absolute repudiation of the obsolete veto power. Being a sincere Democrat, I consider it unjust and dangerous to put all the legislative power under the control or authority of a single man. And, as a question of political interest, I fear that the Legislature of Porto Rico would be deprived of all practical authority by the indefensible measure heretofore referred to.

I also object to the mandatory provision for an annual session of the Senate without fixing the date of that session. As I indicated to General MacIntyre

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and yourself, in our interview at the Bureau of Insular Affairs, the Governor could have complete discretion to convene the Senate at whatever date between the 1st of January and the 31st of December he saw fit. In this way, the appointive power of the Senate would be practically destroyed.

Unless these two provisions are amended in the bill, I prefer to have the Foraker Act remain in force, as in this Act the Governor is granted only a qualified veto power and their own natural citizenship is recognized for the people of Porto Rico. After the declarations of the Mayaguez and San Juan Unionist Assemblies, the party to which I belong cannot depart from its clearly defined demand for Porto Rican citizenship, although, personally, I do not attach great importance to this matter.

I have well grounded reasons for believing that Congress, in the present year, will not devote its time to solving the problems of the Philippines and Porto Rico, more especially on account of the recent statement of President Wilson, published in the Evening Star of Monday, a clipping of which is herewith enclosed. Only the supreme influence of the President could get Congress to take up the Colonial issues of the Democratic

[10-July-14]

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Platforms at this time.

I am confident that you will realize that I am just as anxious as yourself for a liberal form of Government for Porto Rico; but the new regime must satisfy the old aspirations of my country and respond to the hopes we place in the sincerity and fairness of the American people.

Yours very truly,

Ramón Pinerá

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

The Filson Historical Society

November 5, 1914.

Dear Sir:

I have decided to give an official dinner on next Monday evening at eight o'clock in honor of all the new appointments to the Executive Council, including Messrs. Travieso, Domenech and Barceló.

Invitations will be extended to the entire membership of the Council, of the Supreme Court, and the other highest officials of the Insular Government, and I am writing to you to express my especial desire to have you present on this occasion, in fact I have fixed the time for the dinner so as to make it possible for you to attend without altering your plans of sailing for Washington.

I assure you that I would appreciate your prompt acceptance of this invitation.

Sincerely yours,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Muñoz Rivera,

San Juan, Porto Rico.

House of Representatives U. S.

Washington, D. C.

Dec. 24, 1914

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor,
Steamer Coamo,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

My dear Governor:

I received your letter of the 23rd and was exceedingly sorry that I had misunderstood your kind invitation. It would have given me great pleasure to have had this congenial occasion to talk over affairs in which we are mutually interested.

It seems to me that your judgement is correct in reference to the bill coming up in January and getting through the House, but, like you, I think that is as far as it will get during this Session. I am sorry that the provisions of the Bill are such that I must oppose it in a number of fundamental points. But the platform of my party and my own convictions are such that I must insist on amendments for citizenship, a qualified veto, a fixed time for the meeting of the annual session of the Senate, and an elective representation on the Public Service Commission.

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If the Bill, however, does not succeed in passing the Senate at this Session, then its passage through the House will be of very little use, as with a new Congress the Bill would have to be reintroduced and passed again. I most sincerely hope that we may be able to really accomplish something for our people in the near future.

Again regretting my failure to see you and wishing you a pleasant trip and all the joys of the holiday season, I am,

Cordially yours,

Annex Emerg

The Filson Historical Society

June 25, 1915.

My dear Mr. Nuñez Rivera:-

Your letter of the 11th instant with regard to the vacancy which is soon to occur in the Department of Labor, Charities and Correction and recommending Mr. Canuñas for reappointment thereto was duly received.

I shall very soon take up the serious consideration of this important matter, and I assure you I appreciate your advice and recommendation with regard to the appointment.

I have also a very high appreciation of Mr. Canuñas and of his service in this office and shall do my best to recommend the wisest and most just action and what seems best for the good of the people of Porto Rico.

With best wishes for you, I am

Sincerely yours,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Nuñez Rivera,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

86x11

June 30, 1915.

My dear Mr. Muñoz Rivera:-

Since writing you last I have, after very full and careful consideration, concluded that the wise and proper thing to do is to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Manuel Camuñas to the office he now holds, and I have already written the Secretary of War to this effect.

I am writing now simply to make this suggestion to you, that if you can find an opportunity to call on the Secretary of War within the next week or ten days you might add your word of appeal that every effort be made to secure prompt action in this case. Of course we all understand that a vacancy or lapse in the office would be inconvenient both to the Government and to Mr. Camuñas, and I hope therefore the appointment can be made before July 13, which is the date of the expiration of the present term.

You might also say a word as to the inconvenience of further delay in filling the office of Commissioner of Education, and you know that I have made recommendations in regard to both of these positions.

Assuring you of my pleasure in making the recommendation of Mr. Camuñas not only on his account but also on your own, I am

Very respectfully yours,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Muñoz Rivera,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

11x78

June 30, 1915.

My dear Mr. Muñoz Rivera:-

Since writing you last I have, after very full and careful consideration, concluded that the wise and proper thing to do is to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Manuel Comuñas to the office he now holds, and I have already written the Secretary of War to this effect.

I am writing now simply to make this suggestion to you, that if you can find an opportunity to call on the Secretary of War within the next week or ten days you might add your word of appeal that every effort be made to secure prompt action in this case. Of course we all understand that a vacancy or lapse in the office would be inconvenient both to the Government and to Mr. Comuñas, and I hope therefore the appointment can be made before July 13, which is the date of the expiration of the present term.

You might also say a word as to the inconvenience of further delay in filling the office of Commissioner of Education, and you know that I have made recommendations in regard to both of these positions.

Assuring you of my pleasure in making the recommendation of Mr. Comuñas not only on his account but also on your own, I am

Very respectfully yours,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Muñoz Rivera,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

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House of Representatives U. S.
Washington, D. C.

July 20, 1915

My dear Governor:

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your prompt action in the matter of the re-appointment of Mr. Camuñas. This reappointment is very gratifying to his many friends including myself and I am sure that you will find him as efficient and faithful a worker in the discharge of his duties in the future as you have in the past. I do not doubt that a great deal of unnecessary complications have been avoided by renaming him. There was some little antagonism to him shown by some of the Members of the Unionist Party on account of certain alleged neglect or failure to attend to requests that had been made of him. However, this was a matter of little importance, I believe that the prompt action of the Administration in appointing him without allowing his position to become vacant was the very best step that could have been taken in the matter.

I expect to leave for Puerto Rico somewhere between the 1st and 15th of August, at which time I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you and conferring

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with you on matters pertaining to local politics and more especially about the prospects here for the reform of the present organic act, during the next session of Congress. I hope that we may find our way clear to reaching a mutual agreement in the interest of the most important solution of this preeminent question.

Trusting that you are enjoying good health,

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ramon M. Rivera". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name. There is a faint watermark of "The Filson Historical Society" overlaid on the page, which also passes over the signature.

Hon. Arthur Yager,
Governor,
San Juan,
Puerto Rico.

February 14, 1916.

My dear Sir:

I am sending you by this boat a copy of my message to the Legislature.

I have stated in the message the problem which confronts us at present with reference to our finances, and have also recommended what to me seems to be the only sure, safe and just solution. Of course I know in advance that this is a very unpopular suggestion, but it seems to me to be the only proper one upon which we can safely rely, and I am writing to ask you to aid in the best way that you can to induce the Unionist members of the Legislature to support it. Of course we all know how hard it will be to get an increase of the property tax, because the large property holders have great influence with the Legislature. Many of them are members of it. Even the nonresident property owners have many ways of exercising influence and are certain to do so whenever a suggestion is made of increasing the tax. But I see no other way to meet the problem. By the end of the fiscal year, as things now seem, we will have exhausted all of the treasury surplus and perhaps more, and if we pass a general appropriation

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(14 Feb 16)

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bill for next year equal to that of the present year, we would certainly run about \$400,000 behind the receipts. It seems to me impossible to reduce expenditures safely and overcome so large a deficit, so it is absolutely indispensable that we increase the revenues for next year and in a manner that will be absolutely sure to succeed. We cannot afford to try experiments with new forms of taxation, because they might not succeed and we cannot run another year on the present basis without certain disaster. It might be contended that we might rely on the cigar tax which we hope to get from the United States; but of course you will understand that this is not sure, for the bill may not be passed, and besides I think it wholly wrong for us to use that money even if we get it, in overcoming a deficit in the ordinary budget. That money should be used for progressive constructive work in the line of schools and roads and sanitation. I would like to call your attention to two passages in the Governor's Annual Report to the Secretary of War for the last fiscal year which clearly foreshadowed the present situation, namely, the last paragraph on page 24, the first paragraph on page 25, and the latter half of page 240 wherein the treasurer makes his forecast of the probable con-

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dition for the present year, so that the condition is not absolutely unexpected.

I hope that satisfactory progress is being made on the organic act and that the speeches of the commissions will not interfere with its passage, and I should be glad to hear from you on the subject whenever convenient.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very sincerely,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Muñoz Rivera,
Resident Commissioner,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

March 14, 1916.

Dear Sir:

Your letter to Mr. Saldaña with reference to Julio Castillo was handed me by Mr. Saldaña, and I have taken the matter up with Colonel Shanton, Chief of Police.

We have at present no vacancy in the grade immediately above the officer referred to; but the Colonel tells me that there will likely be a vacancy sometime in the next two or three months and that he will bear in mind your request and grant a promotion to District Chief Julio Castillo as soon as opportunity to do so presents itself.

I hope that you are doing everything possible to improve the chance for passage of the new organic act for Porto Rico. I fear that the hearings of the commissions from Porto Rico have diminished the interest in the bill and also that the agitation of the prohibitionists will encumber it with a very unwelcome amendment. I am considering making another trip to Washington as soon as our legislature here adjourns or as soon as I can get its work sufficiently advanced to leave with safety. Meanwhile I would appreciate a letter from you giving me your view as to the status of the bill and its prospects.

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[14 Mar. 16]

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With the highest consideration, I am
Sincerely yours,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Muñoz Rivera,
Resident Commissioner from Porto Rico,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

P. D.- For your information I am enclosing herein a
detailed statement of revenues received last
fiscal year from all sorts of taxes on alcoholic
liquors, etc.

LUIS MUÑOZ RIVERA
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER
FROM PORTO RICO

House of Representatives U. S.
Washington, D. C.



April 7, 1916

My dear Governor:

I very much appreciate the kind courtesy with which you are ready to attend to my recommendation in favor of District Chief, Mr. Castilla, which I sent through our friend Mr. Saldaña. The officer in question is one of the best in the Insular police. He has been in the service for the last thirteen years and undoubtedly deserves the promotion which, without his knowledge, I ask for him. I would be greatly pleased if Col. Shanton would find an early opportunity to do this.

I continue to work on the Jones Bill. The Committee of Pacific Islands and Porto Rico waits its passage in the House to take it up immediately in executive session and make a report without delay. The matter is in the hands of the Chairman of the Committee on Insular Affairs, and the bill, as you know, obtained the privilege of being called at any time, provided it does not interfere with the appropriation bills. We have had the misfortune that, for the last month, the lower House has been continually discussing appropriation bills. Mr. Garrett attempted to get night sessions for Porto

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[7 Apr. 16]

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Rican legislation, but failed. The President included said legislation in his legislative program, which is very encouraging, and the democratic caucus accepted the Executive's views.

The only thing lacking now is that Mr. Jones take the matter up energetically and call his bill to the floor, using the first chance he can find. If legislation is not enacted for Porto Rico this year, the radicals, under the control of Messrs Balbas, Zeno Candia and other leaders, will acquire great strength and will bring serious difficulties. It would be regrettable if the present moment were not taken advantage of to establish and sustain a policy of cordial intelligence and positive results between Americans and Porto Ricans in the Island, assisted by a great movement of public opinion. If this is not accomplished it will not be in any manner my fault.

Letters from you to Mr. Jones, Garrett and McIntyre will produce a rapid effect, if you reason out your indications so as to convince those gentlemen that the problem is a momentous one and should be solved immediately.

I have heard a great deal about the remarks of the Secretary of Porto Rico in a session of the Executive Council, in reference to frauds in the Departments. I believe that if such frauds exist, they must be punished; but I also believe

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that the administration itself should not undertake to give publicity to transgressions which, in case they turn out true, will not add anything to its credit, and in case they are not proven, will place the Secretary of Porto Rico in an unfortunate position.

Very sincerely yours,

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

The Filson Historical Society

April 14, 1916.

My dear Mr. Muñoz Rivera;

Yours of the 7th instant has just come to hand and has been read with interest and appreciation.

I will keep in mind the matter of District Chief Castillo and ask Colonel Shanton to carry out his promise when opportunity offers.

I note carefully your suggestions and advices with reference to the Jones bill. I am at present contemplating another trip to Washington in connection with this bill after our legislature here has adjourned. I shall probably go the latter part of this month though I have not yet definitely decided whether I can do so or not. I have just had a letter from President Wilson expressing afresh his interest not only in the bill but also in the matter of avoiding a prohibition rider on it, which he agrees with me would be very inopportune at this time.

The remarks of the Secretary of Porto Rico with reference to the frauds in the departments were greatly exaggerated in some of the newspapers here. What he actually said, while possibly injudicious,

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[14-Apr-16]

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was not of great importance and was intended simply to further the passage of the law standardizing supplies and regulating purchases to be made for the government. I am hopeful that the law will be passed and that the incidents will be closed without any serious difficulties.

This is the last day of the session of the legislature this year. In fact yesterday was the last day, but they are, as usual, holding over. Both houses have worked with uncommon diligence, and I hope before final adjournment will be able to pluck the fruits of their labors. The leaders of both houses have done well, but I would mention especially the tact and diligence of Mr. Huyke and Mr. Barceló in their capacity as leaders of the Unionist Party.

If I come to Washington I will see you of course immediately upon arrival.

Very sincerely yours,

Governor.

Honorable Luis Muñoz Rivera,
Resident Commissioner for Porto Rico,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

May 3, 1916.

My dear Mr. Muñoz:

At the request of the officers of the Porto Rico Regiment I am writing you with reference to a petition these officers are forwarding to you for introduction into Congress in case the new organic act for Porto Rico should fail of passage at this session.

I doubt not that the petition will explain itself, and if not the reasons for it will be fully given by the officers in a letter accompanying it which they will doubtless write to you. These officers, as you know, have labored and do now labor under serious drawbacks and difficulties as officers in the Army of the United States without being citizens of the country which they serve, and I should be very glad to see these difficulties and disabilities entirely removed.

However, you will understand, that if the new organic act is passed conferring American citizenship collectively upon all Porto Ricans who do not reject it, there will be no need of anything further.

Our information is that this new organic act will probably be passed by the House of Representatives this afternoon; and I have hopes that the same influence

[3-May-16]

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and forces which put the bill through the House will be equally effective in securing its passage by the Senate before adjournment of this session. Nevertheless, these hopes might possibly fail of realization, and in case the new organic act gets into a position in the Senate where its passage at this session would seem impossible or doubtful, it might be well for you to introduce the resolution prayed for by the officers of the Regiment, so that Congress might have opportunity to do justice to them even though they should fail to pass the organic act. The whole matter, of course, will be left to your judgment and discretion.

I sincerely hope we shall receive good news from now on concerning the conditions and prospects of the Jones bill.

With best wishes for you, I am

Sincerely yours,

Governor.

Hon. Luis Muñoz Rivera,
Resident Commissioner,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.