

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 28, 1913

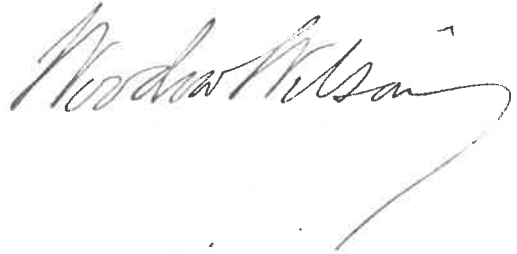
My dear Yager:

Thank you for your list of names of men suitable to be appointed Collector in the Eighth Kentucky District.

I am sincerely sorry that in the absence of the Secretary of War it is impossible for me to come to any final conclusion about the Governor Generalship of Porto Rico, but I shall let you know at the earliest possible moment what our joint judgment is.

In haste

Faithfully yours,



Mr. Arthur Yager,  
Cynthiana, Kentucky.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

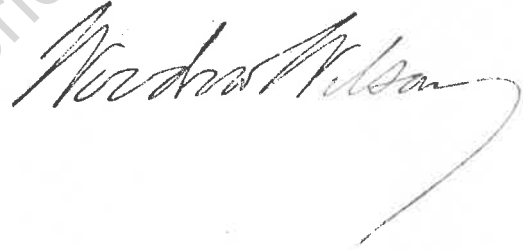
October 29, 1915

My dear Yager:

It gave me genuine pleasure to nominate you as Governor of Porto Rico, and I shall feel every confidence in your success after you get to your post.

In haste, with warmest regard,

Cordially yours,



Mr. Arthur Yager,  
Georgetown College,  
Georgetown, Kentucky.

December 3, 1913.

My dear Mr. President:

A cablegram from the War Department condensing your references to Porto Rico in your message to Congress has been received. I want to express to you the gratification which your remarks have caused to myself and to the great majority of the people of the Island. I am personally convinced from all I have been able to learn here in the past fortnight that in general your ideas are right and that they can be worked out and applied in a safe and sensible way to the conditions as they exist in Porto Rico now. I am working directly to that end, and practically all parties here have agreed to put aside personal and factional differences and work with me to this end; namely, to secure certain modifications in the Foraker Act, which will be at the same time sensible and conservative and also harmonious with the repeated declarations of the Democratic Party to give a larger measure of home rule to the people of Porto Rico.

I desire to embody in a bill certain amendments to the Foraker Act which will accomplish this purpose and have it introduced into both branches of Congress at an early period in the present Congress

and then after I shall have gotten through with the legislature of the Island this winter, to come to Washington and enlist in the support of that bill the administration and all other possible forces and secure its passage. This matter is so important that I feel that the success of our administration here depends wholly upon the manner in which we deal with it. The appointments to office are not nearly so important; in fact I think that it is a wise policy to postpone, as far as possible, all important appointments until this matter can have been settled. In fact I wish it were possible for the existing arrangements to remain as they are until we can determine this fundamental matter. Especially the appointment of heads of departments ought not to be made for another term right now. To this end I have requested Mr. Carrel to delay his permanent retirement from office as Secretary of Porto Rico. He has been from all points of view, a thoroughly satisfactory officer in Porto Rico, nonpartisan, independent, kindly and thoroughly helpful. Unfortunately I find he has sent in his resignation to take effect December 15th and that resignation has been accepted. Would it not be possible for you to request his withdrawal of his resignation so that he could continue, at most, to the end of his term, which is, I believe, 1915? He would perhaps not hold on to the end of his term unless satisfactory changes

are made in the Foraker Act. But whether he held on until 1915 or resigned again in six months or a year, his continuance would relieve me of considerable embarrassment, because I do not now wish to try to name his successor until after the next legislature and the result of our efforts in Congress. The same situation exists in a somewhat lesser degree in relation to the Commissioner of the Interior, Mr. Wilson. The fact is that the salaries attached to these heads of departments are so low that it is impossible, as things now stand, to secure fit men either from the United States or here in Porto Rico. That, by the way, is one of the changes we wish to make in the fundamental Act. For the immediate present, however, I ask, if it be possible for you without embarrassment, to aid me in securing the continuance of Mr. Carrel, either by asking him to withdraw his resignation for the present or by reappointing him as Secretary of Porto Rico. I recommend this after most careful consideration of conditions as they now exist here in the Island. I will take up the matter of Mr. Wilson and the Commissioner of the Interior somewhat later when I have secured further information. I have had a strenuous fortnight on the Island and I have been exceedingly busy; but I am steadily formulating plans and policies which seem to me to be thoroughly in harmony with the admirable suggestions contained in your message.

*With the highest esteem and most sincere  
friendship, I am,*

*Sincerely yours,*

*Governor.*

*Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
Washington, D. C.*

The Filson Historical Society

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
BUREAU OF INSULAR AFFAIRS,  
WASHINGTON.

February 18, 1914.

The bill which is submitted

"To Provide a civil government for Puerto Rico,  
and for other purposes"

follows generally in its arrangement the form of the existing law, and the bill recommended by Mr. Dickinson as Secretary of War in 1910, and the bill that passed the House of Representatives in 1910, and the bill introduced by Mr. Jones, the Chairman of the Committee on Insular Affairs, in 1912.

The bill as now submitted was based on a draft of bill heretofore submitted to the Secretary of War and, since that time, has been criticised by the Governor of Porto Rico, the Secretary of Porto Rico, the Attorney General of Porto Rico and his principal assistant, the Resident Commissioner from Porto Rico, and suggestions received from other sources in the Bureau of Insular Affairs have been embodied in the bill.

While it has not been possible to adopt all of what were in many cases conflicting suggestions, advantage has been taken of all suggestions received. The bill as now submitted meets the approval of the Governor of Porto Rico and, in a general way, it has been approved by the Secretary of War.

It restores the historical spelling of "Puerto Rico". This agrees with the recommendation of the Board on Geographic Names when the matter was submitted to it. The change of spelling was the

result of the form used in the organic act which it is now proposed to replace and has never, as a matter of fact, had full effect in Porto Rico where the former spelling is quite generally used.

There is embodied in the bill (Section 2) a bill of rights. This has been criticised as to certain details and is considered unnecessary by many who have examined the bill, but it was included in the bill which formerly passed the House of Representatives and in the bill introduced by Mr. Jones,

The bill continues in effect all laws and ordinances now in force and effect in Porto Rico until repealed and in doing this the wording used is identical with the wording used in the present organic act to continue laws in force prior to its passage and to provide for their repeal when desired thereafter.

In these respects the bill does not differ from any of those to which reference has been made.

The important changes in the bill can be classed as follows:

First. Citizenship. As recommended in the report of the Secretary of War for 1913, citizenship is "granted on the individual application of the Porto Rican citizen under conditions which make this application as simple as possible without expense to the applicant." This method, as distinguished from extending American citizenship collectively to all Porto Ricans, meets the approval of the Resident Commissioner from Porto Rico. It conforms to the recommendation formerly made by Secretary Dickinson and avoids the legal complication which it was feared, when the existing organic act was passed, would result from making inhabitants of Porto Rico collectively citizens of the United States: that is, of extending to



Porto Rico that provision of the constitution with respect to uniform taxation. It was at that time believed that the government created in Porto Rico should receive for its support the internal revenue and customs collected in the Island. This condition is quite as necessary to the support of the government now as it was then. In favor, therefore, of this method of conferring citizenship, there is,

1st; it meets the approval of the representative of the most numerous political party in Porto Rico,

2nd, it avoids a question which might arise, if citizenship were otherwise conferred, of taking from Porto Rico certain sources of income essential to the support of its government,

3rd, it grants American citizenship freely but does not force its acceptance.

*(4) In the judgement of all those most familiar with the subject it will meet all the requirements of the situation with the least possible trouble & friction*  
Second. Administrative affairs of Porto Rico in the United States.

It places the jurisdiction of Porto Rican matters in the United States under the War Department. This ratifies administrative practice under existing law.

Third. Executive. The chief executive officers consist of the Governor and the Executive Council, composed of

1. Treasurer,
2. Commissioner of the Interior,
3. Commissioner of Education,
4. Commissioner of Agriculture and Labor,
5. Commissioner of Health,
6. Attorney General.

Two of these members of the Executive Council are appointed by the President, *the other 4 by Governor*

It is specifically provided that these executive officers, taken together, shall constitute the Executive Council and shall be

an advisory board to the Governor.

In addition to the heads of the departments, there is provided an Auditor appointed by the President of the United States, to which official there is given extensive powers, and an Executive Secretary, appointed by the Governor.

Fourth. Judiciary. The judiciary consists of the courts now established by law. The United States District Court is made to conform as nearly as practicable with the district courts in the United States. The lower judicial officers not appointed by the President are appointed by the Governor of Porto Rico.

All that relates to the judiciary is practically identical with the Jones bill.

Fifth. Legislative. The legislature is composed of two houses. The senate consists of nineteen members, two elected from each of seven senatorial districts, five elected at large, and, in addition, of the members of the Executive Council who are not members by election of the House of representatives.

The house of representatives consists of thirty-nine members, thirty-five of whom are elected, one each from the thirty-five representative districts, and four at large.

The Governor of Porto Rico is given the power of absolute veto and this power extends to separate items in appropriation bills.

Sixth. Public utilities. There is created a public service commission consisting of the Executive Council and the Auditor. To this body are given the powers given to a body of similar composition in the bill which passed the House of Representatives in 1910.

Seventh. Customs collections. One of the principal sources of revenue of the government of Porto Rico is the collection of customs. Without amending the laws or regulations applicable, the customs service in Porto Rico is placed under the Governor.

For economy in administration, the immigration service is also placed under the Governor.

Eighth. Salaries. The bill increases the salaries of the Governor, of the heads of executive departments, the Auditor, and the judicial officers, *appointed by the President*

Ninth. Appointments. Under the bill the President appoints the Governor and designates a Vice-Governor, <sup>appoints</sup> two heads of executive departments, the judges of the Supreme Court, and the Auditor.

All other appointive officers are appointed by the <sup>Governor</sup> ~~President~~, by and with the advice and consent of the senate of Porto Rico.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON.      Rs-

February 19, 1914.

My dear Mr. President:-

I beg to acknowledge your note in which you say that you believe the Porto Rican bill should receive consideration at this session. In compliance with my letter to you, I now inclose a copy of the bill as well as a memorandum explaining its principal features.

In my annual report I said,

"This bill makes this recommendation effective."

The bill has been gone over carefully in this Department and by the Governor of Porto Rico as well as several of the heads of the Executive Departments in Porto Rico. It has also been gone over by Mr. Munoz Rivera, the Resident Commissioner from Porto Rico. In my opinion it contains the best thought of these and available sources of information.

The importance of this measure to Porto Rico may be such that you would desire to submit this measure, or the recommendation for the passage of such a measure at this time, in a special message to Congress. If this, however, should not be your view of the matter, I would suggest that I could by letter submit it to the chairmen of the committees having in charge of Porto Rican matters in the Senate and the House, with such data with reference thereto, and with your permission, with a statement that the bill in a *principle, & in many of its provisions* general way conforms to your views and meets

- 2 -

your approval and that you feel that the bill should be passed at this session of Congress.

Very sincerely,

Secretary of War.

The President.

The Filson Historical Society

The most fruitful source of error concerning the functions of the War Department is the not unnatural thought that the military establishment is useful only in case of war and that the Secretary of War is the constitutional organ of the President for the administration of the military establishment.

While this is truly the position of the Secretary of War, the functions of the War Department are so varied that, even though war became, *obsolete, it would on the administrative side* indeed, ~~a thing of history,~~ *it would still be fairly occupied as organized and would be necessarily continued.* Other agencies might be created but, when assembled, would be as large and expensive as the present organization.

It is not the intention at this time to review the varied civil duties of the War Department, or the great constructive work in (the way) (of) opening up the territory of the United States, creating public works, and working out sanitary problems, but simply to relate the duties of the War Department in connection with our oversea possessions, and to explain why the overlooking of these possessions, in so far as it is an executive function, was committed to this Department.

The Executive, Congress, and the public look for information as to the Philippines, Porto Rico and the Canal Zone to this Department. In years past this Department has held similar relations to by far the greater part of the United States. This relation has, however, in each case been (of a) temporary (nature.) The military governments established in Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico, and California, were simply in preparation for civil governments with which the War Department should have simply that relation which we are accustomed to see exercised in

our States.

Military government of the United States necessarily replaced the Spanish governments in the territory relinquished to the United States and ceded to the United States as the result of the war with Spain. Once established under such conditions, military government continues at the will of the Commander-in-Chief without reference to actual hostilities and until Congress acts. The governments instituted in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands were conducted under the authority of the President as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy and such authority was exercised, as it has generally been in the past, through the War Department.

Notwithstanding the frequency in the past with which the War Department had been called on to conduct military governments and civil governments during military occupation, there had existed in the War Department no Bureau or Division to which in a particular manner was committed this work of supervision. The urgent need of such a Bureau or Division was well set forth by Mr. Root in his report as Secretary of War (for the year) 1901, as follows:

The policy followed by the American Executive in dealing with the government of the Philippines \*\*\* has been to determine and prescribe the framework of insular government, to lay down the rules of policy to be followed upon the great questions of government as they are foreseen or arise, to obtain the best and ablest men possible for insular officers, to distribute and define their powers, and then to hold them responsible for the conduct of government in the islands with the least possible interference from Washington.

Notwithstanding a rigid adherence to this policy, and consistently with it, the demands upon the Department for action in the vast and complicated business of the island governments have been constant and imperative. \* \* \* The application of the law of military occupation to rights and practices existing under the laws of Spain and the process of overturning inveterate wrongs have brought about frequent appeals to the highest authority, which, being made in the name of justice, have required consideration. The work undertaken has been the building up of government from the foundation upon unfamiliar ground. We have had no precedents, save the simple and meager proceedings under the occupation of California and New Mexico, more than half a century ago, and it has been necessary to decide every question upon its own merits and to make our own precedents for the future.

For the performance of all these duties full and accurate knowledge of the conditions and proceedings of all the governments in all the islands on the part of the authorities in Washington has been required. It has been necessary to follow them step by step. The President and Congress have looked to the War Department for information as to how the trust of government in the various islands was being performed, and tens of thousands of applications by the people of the United States for every conceivable kind of information regarding the islands have poured into the Department in an uninterrupted stream.

Only thorough system could arrange, record, and keep available for use the vast and heterogeneous mass of reports and letters and documents which this business has involved, furnish answers to the questions, conduct the correspondence, and keep the Secretary of War from being overwhelmed in hopeless confusion. The War Department had no machinery for the purpose. No provision for any such administrative machine was made by law. Of necessity, by the detail of officers and the employment of the temporary clerks authorized by law, such machinery has been created in the Department with a chief, an assistant chief, a law officer, a competent force of translators, accountants, stenographers, and recording and indexing and copying clerks. It is called the Division of Insular Affairs of the War Department, and it performs with admirable and constantly increasing efficiency the great variety of duties which in other countries would be described as belonging to a colonial office, and would be performed by a much more pretentious establishment.



The military government in Cuba, or as it has been called "civil government under military occupation" continued until Cuba was delivered to a government of its own people. Again, in 1906, when conditions in Cuba called for the intervention of the United States, the intervention was by the military establishment. A military government was established in Cuba and continued until 1909 when again the government was transferred to the officials of that Republic.

In Porto Rico the military government was continued until May 1, 1900, when the civil government was inaugurated under the Act of April 12 of that year.

When the organic act of Porto Rico, which replaced the military government by a civil government, was passed in 1900, the War Department had not fully organized the facilities for supervision of over-sea territory and Congress did not provide for the continuance of the relations between the War Department and the new government which had existed between the War Department and the military government. On the other hand, the organic act provided for a wide distribution in the United States of the executive business between Porto Rico and the United States.

That this distribution did not work well became early apparent, and in a report of the House Committee on Ways and Means in 1909 in recommending a change in this respect, the Committee said:

"The second section of the bill authorizes the President to consolidate all the executive business between the United States and Porto Rico in a single executive department. Under the existing law such business is distributed between several departments. For instance, the attorney-general of Porto Rico reports to the Attorney-General of the United States; the treasurer and the auditor report to the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States; the commissioner of the interior reports to the Secretary of the Interior of the United States; and the commissioner of education reports to the Commissioner of Education of the United States."

The bill thus reported was passed. The President, by an executive order dated July 15, 1909, provided as follows:

"Under the provisions of Section 2 of this Act hereafter all reports required by law to be made by the Governor or members of the Executive Council of Porto Rico to any official in the United States will be made to the War Department, and all matters pertaining to the government of Porto Rico are placed in the jurisdiction of that department."

The business of the department pertaining to civil government in Porto Rico is, pursuant to Section 87 of the Act of July 1, 1902, assigned to the Bureau of Insular Affairs."

In the Philippines military government continued, the instruments of its execution being increasingly civilian until the passage of the Act of July 1, 1902. This Act differed in one respect from any similar Act for the government of territory of the United States. It followed the form of many such Acts in ratifying and confirming the acts of the President while exercising governmental authority under his authority as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, but it further recognized the close relation between the government that had been established under such orders of the President and the War Department and continued the relations between the new government established under Congressional authority and the War Department which had

existed during the formative period of the government by executive order.

By this organic act the division of the War Department referred to by Secretary Root was made the Bureau of Insular Affairs and the jurisdiction of the War Department over purely civil governments in the island possessions of the United States was recognized.

That the Canal Zone should be placed under <sup>the</sup> War Department follows naturally from the fact that the War Department, of all the departments of the government, was the one prepared to construct the Canal, to protect it after it is constructed, and to operate it. So that following the passage of the Act of August 24, 1912, providing, among other things, for the government of the Canal Zone, the President by executive order naturally made the operation of this government subject to the supervision of the Secretary of War.

The government of the Canal Zone, however, differs materially from the government of the insular possessions, <sup>that are</sup> subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War. The Canal Zone will in operation most nearly assimilate to an Army post, a Naval station, and a great industrial enterprise, combined. The question of government will largely consist of the operation of this enterprise and of the control of persons engaged in its operation and protection. On the other hand, in the Philippines there are approximately 8,000,000 people, and in Porto Rico, 1,200,000, and their governments present all the problems incident to modern governments.

At the beginning of any discussion of the use of the machinery of the War Department, as an instrument for the government of dependent peoples we are confronted with two deeply rooted prejudices existing

in the mind of American people, arising from the circumstances of our own history. The one is that any semblance of government in time of peace by the Army is odious, and the other is that the word colony must not be used to express the relationship which exists between our government and its dependent peoples. The answer to the first objection is that the Army, as such, has nothing whatever to do with the civil government of our possessions entrusted to the War Department. In Porto Rico there is not a single officer of the Army connected with the government in any capacity. In the Philippines there are but four officers detached for service with the civil government, and their duties are exclusively with the Constabulary, which is the semi-military police force of the Islands. Within the War Department itself there are but three officers connected with the civil work in the Bureau of Insular Affairs. The civil work of the War Department, therefore, so far as it pertains to the government of dependent peoples does not at the present time savor in any respect of military government or of civil government under military occupation.

The answer to the second objection is that colonies are no longer looked upon as legitimate spoils in any part of the world, and certainly not under our government. As ~~was stated by~~ <sup>said</sup> President Wilson of our territories overseas ;

"Such territories, once regarded as mere possessions, are no longer to be selfishly exploited; they are part of the domain of public conscience and of serviceable and enlightened statesmanship. We must administer them for the people who live in them and with the same sense of responsibility to them as toward our own people in our domestic affairs."

A distinguished Canadian recently <sup>declared</sup> stated in a public address: "I resent any reference to Canada as a colony of Great Britain -Canada is a nation." To avoid the use of the word "colonial" requires a great deal

of circumlocution, but on account of its origin the objections to its use are so strong as to render the use of the term inadvisable in any discussion of our problems of government.

The administration of those islands <sup>that</sup> falling under the jurisdiction of the War Department involves supervision of the government over approximately 3,000 islands, embracing a population of more than 9,000,000 people representing gradations of society from the most ignorant savage to the highest type of intelligent and well educated gentlemen.

Briefly, the policy of the War Department has been to foster autonomous governments in the Islands subject to its jurisdiction, to avoid interference with the governments there established, and to protect such governments in so far as possible from interference by other departments and branches of our government.

Sufficient time has elapsed to test the weak points in the organic acts of both Porto Rico and the Philippine Islands, and it will be one of the duties of my administration of the War Department to present the difficulties which we have encountered to Congress, in the confident belief that it will grant relief wherever it is required.

In each of the most important acts of legislation which have so far marked the present administration, viz- the tariff, with the income tax section, and the currency law, there are important provisions <sup>that</sup> affecting our insular possessions, and each step in the passage of these acts was studiously followed by this Department lest the interests of the Islands ~~might~~ be overlooked.

The tariff act in its entirety applies to Porto Rico.

The income tax in its entirety was extended to both Porto Rico and the Philippine Islands, with the proviso in each case that its administration in those Islands would be by the appropriate internal revenue

officers of these governments and that all revenues<sup>20</sup> collected under the act should accrue to the general governments of the Islands, respectively.

Advantage was taken of the passage of the tariff act to remove the limitations which had been placed upon the amount of sugar and tobacco which could be imported into the United States free of duty from the Philippine Islands, and to abolish the export tax which had heretofore been imposed on certain commodities when shipped from those Islands.

In the Federal Reserve Act authority was granted for the establishment both in Porto Rico and in the Philippine Islands of branches of national banking associations.

Very few of the important acts of Congress are without interest to the insular possessions and all of such acts must receive the careful attention of the War Department in the hope that, if beneficial, they may be extended to the Islands and, if their application would not meet local conditions, that they be not extended to the Islands.

The policy of the Department, generally speaking, favors the gradual withdrawal of the insular possessions from the field of Congressional action and the extension to the governments organized in the Islands of all legislative powers in so far as these powers do not conflict with national policies. This, of course, does not mean that Congress is to yield any powers of legislation, which is quite impossible under our system, but that the exercise of such powers with reference to our oversea territory shall be exceptional rather than customary.

62  
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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 15, 1914

My dear Governor Yager:

I thank you with all my heart for your message of sympathy. It was gracious of you to think of me in my personal grief, and I am cheered by your friendship.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Woodrow Wilson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed closing. A large, faint watermark "The Filson Historical Society" is visible diagonally across the page, partially overlapping the signature.

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

PERSONAL

August 26, 1914.

My dear General McIntyre:

I am enclosing herein a personal and confidential letter to President Wilson with reference to Santo Domingo. I do not want it to be seen by anybody else if it is possible to prevent it, because I am aware that this is a very delicate subject and I am anxious not to become improperly mixed up in it.

I want to give the President my personal views of the Santo Domingo situation in particular and of the whole Caribbean outlook in general; but as it is a matter that does not concern me officially I am afraid that if the letter should fall into the hands of people who do not agree with me they might criticise me upon the ground of intermeddling.

If you could manage to have this letter put into the President's hands directly without passing through the usual channels I would be obliged to you.

Sincerely yours,

Brigadier General Frank McIntyre,  
Chief, Bureau of Insular Affairs,  
United States War Department,  
Washington, D. C.

Governor.

(Enclosure)



Personal and  
Confidential.

August 26, 1914.

In re Santo Domingo

My dear Mr. President:

It is with great hesitation that I presume to write you upon this subject because it is a matter concerning which I have no official connection whatever. I have concluded, however, to write to give you information which I have been able to secure because I am in close proximity to Santo Domingo and to make some suggestions purely out of a desire to be helpful to the Administration in the management of an exceedingly perplexing and difficult problem.

There has been recently much going to and fro between Santo Domingo and Porto Rico, and a great many officials and private citizens of both islands have talked freely with me upon the subject of the disturbed condition of Santo Domingo and the relations of the island to the United States. I have listened to them all freely and patiently always explaining that I had nothing whatever officially to do with the whole matter.

It is impossible for me, however, not to be greatly interested in this subject and to have formed some definite views as to the problem involved. In the first place, I am confident that the usefulness of the

present Minister of the United States to Santo Domingo has ended. It is not necessary to believe all the charges that are made against him by almost every official and resident of the country in order to come to this conclusion. The Minister may be just as honest and capable as his most ardent friends believe, and still it may be true, and I believe is true, that a condition of suspicion and distrust has been engendered that will make his continuance in the position useless and even harmful to the interests of our country and of Santo Domingo alike.

I do not believe that Santo Domingo would ever be able to secure the benefits of a stable government without a preliminary training and political development by some outside power. There is no outside power to do this but the United States, and we are bound to undertake it both by the obligations entailed by the present Receivership and also by the more indefinite obligations of the Monroe Doctrine. It seems to me to be a duty that we can not honorably avoid. The present crisis produced by the long-continued international struggle surely presents a fitting time for the United States to take some definite steps toward the discharge of these obligations. The great European war also affords us a great opportunity to begin this national enterprise with less danger of international difficulties; but in this crisis

and opportunity it is indispensable that the Administration should be represented in Santo Domingo by the very best men that can possibly be secured, men whose integrity and disinterestedness and patriotism have never been impeached, and whose capacity and skill are unquestioned. It is for these reasons that I believe that it is imperative that a new man of a type different from that of the present incumbent should be appointed as United States Minister to Santo Domingo.

The opening of the Panama Canal and the great conflagration in Europe are both stupendous events though of very different kinds, but both of them are of transcendent importance upon the commerce of the world, both of them, in my judgment, will greatly increase the commercial importance of the West Indies, of Central and South America and of Mexico. As the dominant nation in this hemisphere and as the owner of the Panama Canal, it is inevitable that the United States should acquire greater control and influence in the Caribbean. We have now, in my judgment, a great opportunity, and that is but another name for responsibility. I do not think that we ought to shrink from the steps necessary to the full performance of our duty, and the first of these steps is to adopt a definite and frank policy immediately with reference to Santo Domingo and to select our representatives in that distracted country with direct reference to this

policy.

I hope you will pardon me if I have "butted in," as the boys would say, upon a matter of which I have no concern; my motive, as I have stated above, is simply to be helpful to our country and your Administration in a matter upon which I feel strongly because it is in my neighborhood.

Faithfully your friend,

Governor.

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,

President of the United States,

White House, Washington, D. C.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 15, 1914

My dear Yager:

I have your letter of December  
twelfth and you may be sure will do what  
I can.

In haste

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Woodrow Wilson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Woodrow Wilson".

Hon. Arthur Yager,  
War Department.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Personal

December 19, 1914

Dear Governor Yager:

The President directs me to send to you for your information the enclosed copy of a self-explanatory letter from Representative Underwood, relative to the Porto Rican bill.

Sincerely yours,

*J. M. Smith*  
Secretary to the President

Hon. Arthur Yager,  
Hotel Shoreham.

Enclosure:

11 x 26

Copy

C-Y

December 12, 1914

My dear Mr. President:

It seems impossible at present to make any progress at all with the new Organic Act for Porto Rico, unless we can secure its early consideration and passage by the House. The Senate committee have promised to <sup>take</sup> ~~put~~ it up for immediate consideration as soon as it passes the House, but its present position on the Calendar makes it evident that unless we can secure a special rule it will not be reached until quite late in the session.

Mr. Henry, Chairman of the Committee on Rules of the House, stated that he had no doubt that he could secure a special rule if you would write him a letter indicating your desire to have the bill considered by the House at this session.

There seems to be no opposition to the bill, and Mr. Jones tells me that he is confident that it could be passed in the House in three or four hours, if it could only be called up for consideration.

It is so important, from every viewpoint, that we should at least give this bill a fair chance at this session that I

86 x 11

-2-

am writing to ask you to write a letter to Mr. Henry requesting him to secure a special rule for its consideration. It would produce a very discouraging effect in Porto Rico to have the bill die through mere neglect. Moreover, as it would require at least two years to put the new Organic Act into complete operation in the Island, I am naturally anxious for an opportunity to set up ~~something~~ for the new government under this bill during my administration as Governor of Porto Rico.

I hope, therefore, you will pardon me for asking your aid to this extent, in securing consideration for this important measure. If it should pass the House at an early date it is then assured of getting through the committee of the Senate, and even if it should fail, at the last, of consideration by the Senate, it would nevertheless be very encouraging to the people of Porto Rico to have it get so far toward its passage.

With the highest regard and esteem, I am,

Sincerely your friend,

Arthur Jager.

The President,  
The White House.



COPY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON.

December 16, 1914.

Hon. Woodrow Wilson,

The White House, Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I am in receipt of your favor of the fifteenth instant, in reference to the Porto Rico bill now on the calendar of the House. The bill meets with my cordial approval and I am anxious to aid Mr. Jones in securing an opportunity for its consideration in the House. The difficulty that confronts us at present is the pressure of the appropriation bills and if we sidetrack them for one measure it is hard to hold others back, but it will give me pleasure to take the matter up with Mr. Henry, show him your letter and endeavor at an early date after the Christmas Holidays to try and secure an opening where we can bring the bill up for consideration.

With kindest regards, I am

Cordially yours,

O. W. Underwood

86 X 11

June 28, 1915.

My dear Mr. Tumulty:-

I am enclosing herein clippings from "Justicia" which is the newspaper published here by Mr. Santiago Iglesias, the labor leader in Porto Rico. Of course you have not time to read all of this, but I am marking a few passages just to indicate to your mind the use that Mr. Iglesias is attempting to make of his appearance before the Commission on Industrial Relations and of his visit to you and the newspaper notoriety that he has secured in the country.

The newspaper accounts of the hearing were wholly one-sided and unfair to the Government of Porto Rico. There were two questions before the Commission and they were confused together. One was the general problems and conditions of labor in Porto Rico; the other, the specific charges made against the Government of Porto Rico on account of its conduct during the sugar strike last February.

The newspapers stated that many or most of the things stated by Mr. Iglesias before the Commission were conceded by the representatives of the Porto Rican Government. Of course much that was said on the general labor conditions in Porto Rico was conceded, because these conditions are bad and have been bad for centuries, and I fear will continue to be bad for some time to come because of

the traditions, customs and difficulties left by several centuries of Spanish control. But the charges made by Mr. Iglesias against the Governor and the Government of Porto Rico were not conceded at all, not one of them, on the contrary, they were <sup>all</sup> absolutely refuted and disproved. Yet somehow the newspapers of America seem to have got it on the wires that these charges were conceded.

I hope that when you do bring this matter to the attention of the President you will also remind him of my report on the strike, of April 19, written and sent to his office before this hearing had been arranged, and which sets forth clearly and proves by documents enclosed, the whole attitude of the Government during this strike.

I wish the President and you yourself to know that the Government of Porto Rico did nothing but its duty in the rather trying and difficult situation during this strike. Nobody was deprived of constitutional or legal rights for one moment; there was no martial law; no abuse of the laborers by the police; no prohibition of public meetings, and no dissolution of any peaceable public meeting except when it ceased to be peaceable and became riotous and disorderly.

Mr. Iglesias seems to complain that the rural zone was placed under the charge of the police. The so-called rural zone is always under the police in Porto Rico;

there is no other constabulary or police force to keep order in the rural communities except the insular police.

I wish you would observe the spirit of Mr. Iglesias as manifested in these publications in his papers and which I have marked, toward the Governor of Porto Rico and the Bureau of Insular Affairs and any one else that may have attempted to check or control him; and also his manifest purpose to try to make it appear to the poor ignorant peasants all over the Island of Porto Rico that he has greater power than the whole Government of Porto Rico and the Bureau of Insular Affairs combined. Of course he will endeavor to make use of this deception of the ignorant masses of the Island next winter when he is planning a general strike all over the Island. He may persuade the ignorant peasants that he has much more power than the Governor and the Bureau of Insular Affairs and the War Department combined and produce riots and scenes of disorder that can of course result only in harm to the laborers.

I am writing all this in the hope that you will aid in bringing the whole of the matter to the attention of the President and perhaps secure some action that will forestall the reckless selfishness of an unscrupulous labor agitator who is, I am perfectly sure, working entirely for his own ends. Please pardon my taking up so much of your time.

*With best wishes for you personally, I am  
Sincerely your friend,*

*Governor.*

*Honorable Joseph P. Tumulty,  
Secretary to the President,  
Washington, D. C.*

*(Enclosures)*

The Filson Historical Society

February 26, 1916.

Mr. W. L. Threlkeld, Cashier,  
Phoenix and Third National Bank,  
Lexington, Kentucky.

My dear Mr. Threlkeld;

Your letter of February 16 reached me only a day or two ago and I hasten to comply with your request, and I assure you that it is with great pleasure that I do so. I am writing as good a letter as I know how to my friend the President in your behalf and I mean every word of it.

I am so far away that I do not know yet whether the bill has passed, but I hope it has, for I am greatly interested in the objects aimed at by this bill not only for the good that it may accomplish for the farmers of the United States but also for those of Porto Rico who are in especial and dire need of some protection from exorbitant rates of interest and unable to secure loans which they could use to great advantage to themselves and their island.

Please keep me advised as to the situation, for I am interested also in your own ambitions in connection with it.

Sincerely your friend,

Governor.

February 26, 1916.

My dear Mr. President:

I see that the bill providing for a Federal Farm Loan Board has passed Congress and that it will be necessary for you to select five members of this Board.

I am writing to recommend to you for membership upon it a gentleman whom I know to be in every way qualified for the service. I refer to Mr. W. L. Threlkeld, of Lexington, Kentucky. I have known Mr. Threlkeld personally and intimately for thirty years or more. He is a man of education and capacity, of wide experience and thorough training in banking and financial matters, of absolutely unquestionable integrity, and of firm-rooted convictions as to the nature of public service, which I am sure would make him conspicuously successful in administering the affairs of a Board which would control rural credits. He was reared and has lived all his life in the agricultural State of Kentucky in intimate touch with the farmers and has profound sympathy with the purpose and ideals underlying this movement, and I am sure that if you knew him as I know him you would recognize his

eminent fitness for this position. A glance at his record as a banker and leader of men in his profession will convince you of his training and experience, and I wish to assure you that his personality, character and spirit are in thorough keeping with this record, and I sincerely hope that you may see your way to place him upon this Board.

With best wishes and unflinching regards, I am  
Sincerely your friend,

Governor.

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
White House, Washington, D. C.



# Phoenix and Third National Bank

CAPITAL AND SURPLUS  
\$960,000.00

Y. ALEXANDER, PRESIDENT  
H. P. HEADLEY, VICE PRESIDENT  
W. A. MCDOWELL, VICE PRESIDENT  
W. L. THRELKELD, CASHIER  
B. M. DARNABY, ASSISTANT  
C. Y. FREEMAN, CASHIERS

LEXINGTON, KY. Feb. 16, 1916.

Gov. Arthur Yager,

San Jaun, Porto Rico.

My Dear Governor:-

No doubt you have knowledge of the contemplated legislation in regard to the establishment of the Federal Farm Land Bank through out the Country.

It seems that the bills before both the House and the Senate will likely be enacted into law, and the administration of the law will be under the direction and control of the Federal Farm Loan Board, which will consist of five members to be appointed by the President of the United States.

I am an applicant for the position of a member of this Board, and I shall esteem it a favor if you would address a letter to the President on my behalf. Which letter you might send to me for my use in connection with other testimonials.

You are somewhat familiar with my business career and my qualifications for this position, but by way of refreshing your mind somewhat, I enclose a sheet which was drawn up by one of my friends here, and which is a pretty good summary, though not including all the positions I have filled and the interests I have endeavored to promote.

# Phoenix and Third National Bank

CAPITAL AND SURPLUS  
\$960,000.00

V. ALEXANDER, PRESIDENT  
H. P. HEADLEY, VICE PRESIDENT  
W. A. McDOWELL, VICE PRESIDENT  
W. L. THRELKELD, CASHIER  
B. M. DARNABY, ASSISTANT  
C. Y. FREEMAN, CASHIER

LEXINGTON, KY.

Yager #2.

I would have you to believe that I submit this sheet in no spirit of conceit or self-exploitation, but simply to refresh your mind, and to be somewhat of a basis for anything that you may be kind enough to write in your own good way.

I hope that you will not consider that I am asking too much at your hands, but permit me to make the further request that I may have your letter at your earliest convenience.

I know of your pleasant and almost intimate relations with President Wilson, and feel sure that a letter from you will be of great assistance to me in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Dic. W.L.T./L.L.H.

*W. L. Threlkeld*

*P.S. Be pleased to give my kindest regards to Mr Yager & all your family W.L.T.*

The House Bill 6838, introduced by Mr. Moss, of Indiana, January 4th, 1916 has been favorably reported from the Committee on Banking and Currency, and it is believed that this bill will be passed by both the House and Senate this week or at a very early day.

This is a bill "To provide capital for agricultural development, to create a standard form of investment based upon farm mortgage, to equalize rates of interest upon farm loans, etc. etc."

The bill contemplates that these matters shall be administered under the direction and control of a Federal Farm Loan Board, and that this Board shall consist of five members, to be appointed by the President of the United States, and that not more than three of such members shall be appointed from one political party.

Mr. Threlkeld inaugurated the Security Trust Company, which is the largest financial institution in central Kentucky or in Kentucky outside of Louisville, and was Secretary and Treasurer of it for about twelve years, conducting it through all its early and experimental stages to its full tide of success.

He was Cashier of the Lexington Banking and Trust Company for six years, and upon its merger with the Phoenix and Third National Bank became Cashier of the consolidated bank and Secretary and Treasurer of the Phoenix and Third Trust Company.

He is now President of the Lexington Clearing House Association and Chairman of the Committee on Jurisprudence of the Kentucky Bankers' Association. Was representative of the Phoenix and Third National Bank, as one of the five banks effecting the organization of the Federal Reserve Bank of the Fourth District, located at Cleveland, O.

In civic matters and matters requiring the service of one supposed to be of general business qualifications and some degree of learning and scholarship, beg to say that he is a college graduate in Degree of M. A. in the Classical Course, was President of the Chamber of Commerce of Lexington, Kentucky, at the time Lexington secured the Louisville Southern Railway and the Lexington and Eastern Railway, and was Chairman of the Committee having these matters in charge. He was the President of the Kentucky Chautauqua Association, of Lexington, Kentucky, for nearly twenty years. Has been a Trustee of Centre College, Danville, Ky., and a member of its Executive Committee for fifteen years. Filled a chair in Transylvania University (of the Christian Church) for five years.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

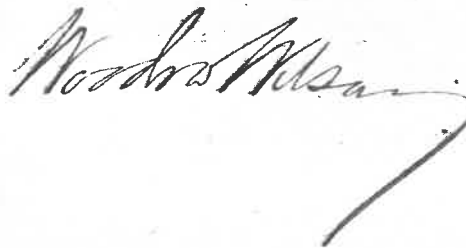
April 5, 1916

My dear Yager:

Thank you for your letter of March  
twenty-ninth and its contents. I find it  
both interesting and convincing. This is just  
a line of acknowledgment, but of cordial ac-  
knowledgment. If I have an opportunity to  
speak about the inopportuneness of attaching  
a prohibition clause to the Porto Rican bill  
at this time, you may be sure I will do so.

In haste

Cordially and sincerely yours,



Hon. Arthur Yager,  
Government House,  
San Juan, Porto Rico.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

March 20, 1916

My dear Yager:

The enclosed speaks for itself and I have just written to Mr. Gompers that I would refer his letter to you and ask for your comment and for any information you are in a position to give me about the matters he alludes to.

With warmest regard and the hope that everything goes well with you,

Cordially and sincerely yours,



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

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 15, 1916

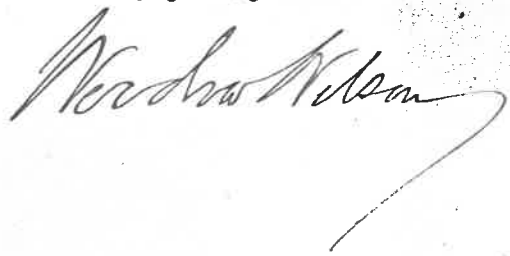
My dear Yager:

Thank you warmly for your telegram and letter. The prospect of four more years is very sobering to me and I do not know that I feel very much elated, but I am deeply grateful to the country for showing such evidences of trust and confidence.

I agree with you that it is of the utmost importance that the Porto Rico Bill should be passed, and I think that on the whole it would be wise for you to remain in this country, at any rate, long enough to see whether its passage at the short session is possible or not.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

Hon. Arthur Yager,  
Georgetown, Kentucky.



November 23, 1916.

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

Upon arriving in Washington from Kentucky some days ago I had a consultation with the Secretary of War and General McIntyre of the Bureau of Insular Affairs and we all concluded that it would be better for me to hasten on to Porto Rico rather than wait in Washington for the re-assembling of Congress. We were led to this conclusion partly by the recent political developments in Porto Rico, but chiefly by the fact that we could get no assurance in advance that the Senate would take up the Porto Rican bill immediately upon their reassembling or even before the Christmas holidays, and as I was needed now in Porto Rico it seemed unwise to linger in Washington for so long a time upon an uncertain contingency. I had hoped for a brief conference with you in the last few days but in default of that I am writing this letter upon the eve of my departure to beg of you that you make mention in your forthcoming message to Congress of the Porto Rican bill as one of the most urgent items of unfinished legislation. In support of this request I submit the following consider-



ations:

First. The Philippine bill has already been passed and is in operation and as this bill and that of Porto Rico have usually been classed together it seemed to the Porto Ricans an unfair discrimination for Congress to pass the one and omit the other.

Second. As you doubtless remember, Congress suspended the elections in Porto Rico which were to take place November 7th until some future date to be fixed by the President. This action was received with gratification in Porto Rico because it seemed to imply a serious intention on the part of Congress to complete and pass the Porto Rican bill at the short session this winter. It would be a grievous disappointment to have to fix a date for and to hold these suspended elections without having first passed the new organic act.

Third. As explained in my previous letter, recent political developments in the Island, due to the sudden death of the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Muñoz Rivera, have made still more urgent the prompt passage of the Porto Rican bill. The remnants of the anti-American party in the Island have seized upon the occasion to renew their agitation for independence and to try to prevent the passage of the new bill, to which they are naturally opposed. It is, therefore, not only of urgent importance that it be passed

at this session but that it be passed promptly, so that the elections can be held under its provisions and the new government organized promptly in the spring. I am perfectly confident that this will allay all political discontent and place the Island in a condition of peace and progress.

As I am leaving today for my post of duty, I submit this suggestion to you in the hope that it will stimulate the Senate to prompt action upon this urgent matter.

The bill has passed the House. It has been unanimously reported to the Senate with some amendments and, therefore, is in the most favorable position possible for prompt and early action upon it by the Senate, before the ways have been filled with other matters that may distract the attention of the Senate from the little island and its interests.

Assuring you of the highest personal regard and friendship and congratulating you afresh upon your most remarkable reelection to the great office of President, I am, and always, sincerely

Your friend,

November 23, 1916.

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

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The bill has passed the House. It has been unanimously reported to the Senate with some amendments and, therefore, is in the most favorable position possible for prompt and early action upon it by the Senate, before the ways have been filled with other matters that may distract the attention of the Senate from the little island and its interests.

Assuring you of the highest personal regard and friendship and congratulating you afresh upon your most remarkable reelection to the great office of President, I am, and always, sincerely

Your friend,

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 27, 1916

My dear Governor Yager:

I was sincerely sorry not to see you before you left for Porto Rico. I did not know that your early departure had been planned.

I fully appreciate the importance of the Porto Rican Bill and have embodied a strong recommendation of its passage in the address which I shall make to Congress now in a few days.

I shall try to interest myself continuously in the matter until something is accomplished.

In haste, with warmest regard,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

Hon. Arthur Yager, Governor,

San Juan, Porto Rico.



December 15, 1916.

*My dear Mr. President;*

*In the hope that there might possibly come an opportunity for you to have a brief conference with Dr. W. W. King, of the United States Health Service, I am giving him this letter of introduction.*

*Dr. King is an officer of the United States Health Service on detail here in Porto Rico, and the grade and quality of his work, his high character and the industry and perseverance with which he has made a study of Porto Rican problems of a political and social sort as well as of Porto Rican diseases, have earned my highest appreciation.*

*Faithfully your friend,*

*Honorable Woodrow Wilson,*

*President of the United States,*

*Washington, D. C.*

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON.

July 8, 1918.

My dear Governor:

Under date of April 30, 1918, Santiago Iglesias, President of the Free Federation of Laborers of Porto Rico, presented, through the President of the American Federation of Labor, to the President certain charges against you.

These charges were made public in Porto Rico. It is, therefore, unnecessary to recite them.

With such expedition as was possible in view of the urgent demands of the war on the time of every officer of the government, these charges have been examined.

In view of evidence at hand, it is unnecessary to make further investigation. The charges, in so far as they reflect on you personally or on the conduct of your office, have no foundation. To go through the forms of an investigation in view of available evidence would at such a time as this be a severe reflection on this Department.

Very sincerely,

(Sgd.) Newton D. Baker,  
Secretary of War.  
Honorable Arthur Yager,  
Governor of Porto Rico,  
San Juan, P. R.



WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON.

July 8, 1918.

Honorable Arthur Yager,  
Governor of Porto Rico,  
San Juan, P. R.

My dear Governor:-

I can not dismiss from my mind the situation of labor in Porto Rico or the condition of those in Porto Rico habitually without regular labor.

I know well from your public expressions, as well as from private conversation, that this is a subject near to your heart and to which you have devoted much attention. I know also that something has been accomplished in the way of improvement of labor conditions. I know that you have plans which would bring about better conditions. Unfortunately, these plans require the cooperation of others outside of Porto Rico, and this leads up to the following thought, having in mind particularly the obtaining of the necessary assistance from without Porto Rico.

I am going to take up with the President the question of having a general study of labor conditions in Porto Rico, industrial and agricultural, made by persons whose views and recommendations would command the respect of all in Porto Rico, as well as reasonably assure to us that outside assistance without which we seem unable to do all that we would like to see done

In taking this up with the President I shall have in mind the possibility of having the commission or persons doing this work visit Porto Rico about next September.

Very sincerely,

(Sgd.) Newton D. Baker,  
Secretary of War.

San Juan, July 30-1918.

My dear Mr. President:

Sometime in the first half of May, 1918, I learned thru the newspapers of the country that Mr. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, had addressed to you a letter enclosing and endorsing charges against me made by Santiago Iglesias a labor leader of Porto Rico in connection with the labor conditions and strikes in this Island.

Mr. Gompers requested that a National Commission be sent to Porto Rico to make an investigation of the conditions here and also to investigate the charges against myself and file a report with recommendations.

I have not received an official copy of the letter of Mr. Gompers and the attached documents; but "Justicia," a local paper issued in San Juan by Mr. Iglesias has published what purport to be copies of all these papers and I have deemed it proper to send you a brief reply to all these charges based upon this publication.

In the first place I wish to make absolute and unqualified denial of each and every one of the charges both in general and in particular. There is no truth whatever in any of them, and the statements and allegations introduced by way of proof are all without foundation or else so grossly exaggerated as to make them substantially untrue.

The first four of the charges as published seem to be identical and may be treated together. The general charge made and reiterated in these four numbered paragraphs is that I was unfriendly to the sugar laborers of Porto Rico during the strike movement which began in February, 1918, and continued throughout the month of March; and that I showed this unfriendliness by refusing to call or encourage meetings for composing the differences between the workers and their employers, and in so doing failed to abide by the declarations and instructions of the President of the United States and of the mediation commission appointed by him.

In making this general charge, Mr. Iglesias states incidentally that there were at one time 26,000 striking workmen; that a large portion of the sugar industry is owned by alien enemies, and that a great and serious loss in the production of sugar was caused thereby.

The charge is absolutely false. I deny it in the most positive terms. I have never refused to call a conference or meeting between committees of striking workers and their employers at anytime when it was possible to do so or where there was any chance to accomplish any good for the laborers by such a meeting.

I did refuse during the period mentioned to call a general conference of all the mill owners and growers of sugar cane on the one hand and the leaders of the Free Federation of Labor on the other. I was requested to call such a conference during the progress of this controversy by Mr. Iglesias, the labor leader and organizer of the Free Federation, by Mr. F. C. Roberts the official Conciliator of the Department of Labor at Washington, and at last by Mr. Samuel Compers the

President of the American Federation of Labor. I considered this matter long and carefully for I was very anxious to secure some increase in wages and other advantages if possible for the sugar laborers. When in Washington I had had a conference on this general subject with Mr. Compers, Mr. F. C. Roberts present. It was agreed in a general way at this conference that we should endeavor to secure an uninterrupted harvest of the sugar crop in Porto Rico this year, and that wherever disputes and controversies might arise between the laborers and their employers, we should endeavor to have them fairly settled by means of conferences between the parties. That Mr. Roberts who was coming down as a representative of the Federal Department of Labor would assist as a mediator in these conferences, and that I would cooperate in carrying out this policy by calling conferences wherever and whenever controversies and disputes should arise. This did not mean of course that I would attempt to call a general conference of all those engaged in the whole sugar industry throughout the island regardless of whether there were any disputes to settle or other conditions precedent to a conference. Nevertheless, I did consider frequently and seriously the calling of a general conference on the subject of labor condition in the whole sugar industry, in order to secure some advantages for the laborers and make impossible any serious strike.

My general attitude on the subject may be seen from a circular letter issued to the police and officials of the municipalities under date of February 12, which is enclosed.

Finally however, I concluded that a general conference was impracticable for the following reasons:

(1) There was at no time any general strike or even a strike movement among the sugar workers

in most parts of the island. When the controversy was in its most acute stage there were never more than 10,000 cane workers on a strike and these were almost wholly confined to the north-eastern district of the island and affected only two mills - that at Fajardo and Naguabo. These two mills together have a capacity of about 30,000 tons of sugar out of the 500,000 tons produced by the whole island. And these two mills were not at anytime closed entirely, but for some three or four weeks were run with difficulty and at greatly reduced capacity. There were in a few other localities brief and sporadic efforts made to create strike conditions, but they were so unsupported by the workers that they were soon settled and the operation of no mills was ever seriously affected except the two mentioned.

(2) The cane workers over the island generally were and are entirely unorganized. They are practically not represented at all in the Free Federation of Labor. Only an insignificant per cent of the sugar workers of the whole island are members of this Federation, which consists chiefly of cigar makers, stevedores and skilled workers of the towns and cities. Consequently there were in existence at the time no committees of these laborers to meet and treat with their employers and, as stated above, no grievances or disputes in most places to discuss and settle.

(3) No demands or complaints had been submitted to the employers by their workers at any time either as to wages or other labor conditions.

Much stress is laid by Mr. Iglesias upon a so called list of grievances and demands which he claims was submitted to all the factories and sugar growers, and which was to serve as a basis of discussion by the proposed general conference.

This list of grievances, etc., was drawn up by the leaders of the Free Deferation of Labor on September 7, 1917, four months before the opening of the harvest season and before the price of sugar had been fixed by the Food Commission. It was drawn up without the knowledge or consent of the workers themselves. It was signed by the Secretary of the Free Federation, was printed as a circular and in this form sent to the sugar growers and mill owners in September. It was also sent to Mr. Gompers with the request that he secure the endorsement of it by the Committee of the American Federation of Labor and the promise of strike benefits in case strikes resulted.

Neither in its origin or form could this circular be considered as a basis for a conference to settle a labor dispute, and it was ignored absolutely by all parties concerned, -by the mills and sugar growers, by Mr. Gompers and by the cane workers themselves.

When the harvest season opened in January the mills began their grinding and the workers everywhere went to work as usual. Wages were undoubtedly increased in varying proportions, but absolutely no attention was paid to this circular. (Exhibit E.)

(4) Finally, to the above reasons must be added the fact that Mr. Iglesias is not only the leader and official organizer of the Free Federation of Labor in Porto Rico but he is also the leader and founder of a political party. He has transformed the Free Federation into the Socialist party and was himself elected Senator-at-Large at the last election by this new party whose principles and methods seem to be a combination of those of the Bolsheviki of Russia and of the I.W.W.'s. He hopes to organize all the agricultural laborers of Porto Rico and lead them thru the Federation of

Labor into the Socialist party and so make of himself a powerful political factor in this little island.

For all these reasons it was manifestly impracticable to secure a general conference of all the sugar growers called together to meet a political leader and submit to him for settlement labor disputes which as far as nine-tenths of them were concerned did not exist with their own employees.

As proof of my general policy of calling a conference between committees of striking workers and their employers, I submit two instances both of which were connected with strikes in the cigar factories of the island. The cigarmakers are fairly well organized and most of them belong to the Federation of Labor. Since I came to Porto Rico there have been two serious and long-continued strikes in this industry. One of them occurred in 1914 and the other in the Fall of 1917. Both of these were finally amicably settled in conferences which I myself called. In the earlier case I submit two letters (Exhibits A and B) one dated June 3 and another dated June 8, 1914, when the conference was reported as about to fail, urging upon the conferees the importance of making another effort to effect a settlement. I also submit letter of Mr. Frese, Vice-President of the Cigar Company, dated June 11th (Exhibit H.), advising me of the settlement of this strike.

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the trolley strike in 1917, to bring the parties together for discussion and settlement of their differences. In some cases my efforts have been successful, in a few others, they have failed owing to an unwillingness of one or both parties to make concessions, but in no case have I ever failed or refused to employ this method whenever it was possible to do so.

I adopted this method this year also when the strike occurred at Fajardo and urged both sides to meet together with Mr. Roberts, the Commissioner of Conciliation, and try to reach a settlement. Both sides agreed to this and this conference should have taken place; but Mr. Roberts was sick for a few days and so did not go to Fajardo until it was too late to secure a conference. I enclose copy of telegram which I sent to Mr. Fis, one of the strike leaders at Fajardo, and Mr. Bird, manager of the sugar mill, and also the reply of Mr. Fis. (Exhibits C and D, respectively) Mr. Fis must have referred to the circular sent out in September (Exhibit E) as the basis of his statement that laborers had been trying for five months to secure concessions from their employers, for no other demand or complaint of any sort had ever been submitted by them to their employers.

As I acted with reference to a conference at Fajardo I should most certainly have acted with reference to a general conference for the whole sugar industry if the situation had at any time justified it, or I would have called a local conference for any particular locality if conditions had warranted it.

The 5th charge is a distinct and different matter. I am charged with having wilfully refused to give timely and necessary assistance to the organization of a Porto Rican chapter of the American Red Cross and also with similar negligence and refusal to name Committees of National Defence and for the Liberty Loans, thereby giving aid and comfort to the enemy.



In support of this charge there was published some correspondence between Mr. Henry W. Dooley, former Chairman of the Porto Rican Chapter of the American Red Cross, and Mr. F. C. Roberts, Special Agent of the Federal Department of Labor. Both of these gentlemen it will be noticed committed the impropriety of meddling in local politics at a time when they were holding official positions which should have precluded such action; but it was far worse than an impropriety for them to give their support to charges that were utterly false and malicious, as all of them are.

I deny most emphatically every direct charge or insinuation contained in these letters.

As to my failure to aid in the organization and work of the American Red Cross in Porto Rico, it is perhaps sufficient for me to submit a copy of the Resolutions voluntarily and unanimously adopted by the Executive Committee of the Porto Rican Chapter of the American Red Cross June 3, 1918. This action was taken by the Committee almost immediately after the publication of the letters of Mr. Dooley at a meeting which was attended by all the members of the Committee, (See Exhibit F) except my wife and Mr. Dooley, and the last mentioned was present and participated in the discussion but did not vote on the roll call.

As to the Liberty Loan campaigns, the statements are utterly false and absurd, as everybody in Porto Rico conversant with the facts will certainly testify. Indeed at the very moment when these gentlemen were writing these letters of slander and at the very moment when Mr. Iglesias and Mr. Roberts were busy at Washington conducting their campaign of slander and abuse against the Governor, I was myself intensely occupied here in bringing to a triumphant conclusion the Third Liberty Loan campaign, with a total subscription of \$2,783,000. Altho this was not quite equal to the quota assigned to the island, it was far more

than was expected by any one in Porto Rico who was familiar with actual conditions.

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There are also many large American corporations doing business here which usually make their subscriptions to these loans either wholly or chiefly thru their home offices in the United States and leave the islanders to struggle along without their powerful aid. Still in spite of these handicaps the people here have done their best and they have done well. In all of these campaigns, owing to the peculiar customs and traditions of the people the governor has been compelled to give far more personal attention and leadership to these campaigns than the governor of any state or territory in the United States.

I will not take time in this letter to discuss Mr. Dooley's equally absurd charge that I delayed the organization of a local Council of National Defense, even after he had suggested it. It is thought by some residents of Porto Rico that it is absolutely necessary for us to copy immediately every form of private or semi-private organization that may be originated any where in the United States for any and every kind of war work. As a

matter of fact the people here are not so accustomed to the organization and management of these private associations, councils, and boards as are the people of our more experienced communities at home, and they are more in need of guidance and direction. And owing to their Spanish training they are strongly inclined to depend upon the Governor for leadership.

For instance, when the Food Commission was created by law in April 1917, the responsibility for the direction of all of its activities was placed directly upon the Governor. When the Four Minute Men was organized, it was found that in order to make it go well, the governor must assume the position of local Director. A large number of organizations have been launched and some of them are performing important work, as for example, the Woman's Council for National Defense, but owing to lack of money and other reasons, there has not yet been formed the General Council for National Defense.

During the last 15 or 16 months the government of Porto Rico has been confronted with many complicated and perplexing problems. On March 2, 1917, the new organic act was approved which involved a complete reorganization of the local government. In about one month thereafter, the United States entered the great war. Very soon thereafter, the Selective Service Law was passed by Congress and applied to Porto Rico, and obligatory military service was laid upon these new made citizens who had never before conceived of such a thing. Swiftly followed the registration of the young men for which a complete machinery had to be created, prohibition of alcoholic liquors with its financial difficulties, officers training camps, cantonment building and encampments, etc., etc. And in all these great changes, new duties and responsibilities, the people of the island generally not understanding well the differentiation between govern-

ments and departments have looked to their Governor for direction and guidance, for the righting of every wrong, for the correction of every mistake and for the solution of every problem.

The record of achievement is written in the history of this memorable period. I appeal to it with confidence and will cheerfully abide by the result.

Charge No. 6 declares that I have "permitted the violation by officials of the island of fundamental rights of free assemblage, free speech, and free locomotion upon the highways, menacing with armed force the free and peaceful organization of labor upon the island of Porto Rico, for the lawful improvement of its standard of living."

This charge I emphatically deny. The officials of the island have not violated any of the fundamental rights of laborers of Porto Rico.

Freedom of speech and free locomotion upon the highways as guaranteed by the constitution and laws of Porto Rico have not been interfered with.

Free speech of course in all countries must have some limitations and responsibilities; but as wide liberties as were possible under the law have been constantly allowed the laborers and their speakers, all charges and allegations to the contrary notwithstanding. Unfortunately all of the leaders and speakers of the Free Federation habitually make all sorts of charges against the police and other officials of the government, which, upon investigation, prove to be either entirely false or so grossly distorted and exaggerated as to be substantially untrue. Scores of telegrams have poured into my office during this and previous strikes making charges of wrong-doing against both insular and local officials, and they have been thoroughly investigated by competent and impartial men and have been found almost universally to be absolutely untrue.

Only one kind of public meeting has been in any way curtailed or interfered with during this period, but that kind of assembly is in no sense a constitutional right, namely the so-called "manifestations" or parades along the roads. These are peculiar and intensive methods employed in this country, not of supporting a strike, but rather of creating strike conditions where none exist. A crowd is gathered in a town in a district where a strike is desired or has been declared by the Federation. In the crowd are some strikers, but in addition many loafers and idlers and some criminals, and preceded by an automobile containing speakers and with red flags and banners and horns they parade noisily along the roads through the cane fields and announce the strike to the workers in the fields bordering the roads and invite them to cease work. If the laborers continue to work, they are abused and vilified and threatened and sometimes forcibly pulled out of the fields. In general our experience shows that these parades lead to violence and disorder, to intimidation of those who wish to continue work and frequently to clashes between strikers and non-strikers and also between strikers or so-called strikers and the police. Moreover in the wake of these parades there usually follows a string of cane fires in the standing cane which destroy it.

The law of Porto Rico gives to the Municipalities, which include rural territory, the power to enact ordinances for the control of these parades. This year, owing to war conditions and the general desire not to encourage strikes that would interrupt the sugar harvest, the permits for these "manifestations", were not granted. Of course the police were instructed to enforce the law and not to allow these parades without permits from the local authorities. To this extent and to this extent only was there any interference with or any curtailment of any sort

of meetings or assemblies which the laborers desired to hold. In my judgment, under all the conditions existing at this time of war and difficulty, this much of precaution against certain disorder was entirely justified.

There is one other charge made in paragraph 7 and repeated in paragraph 8, that the Governor made misleading statements in his official telegram to Mr. Fiz, of March 12; his cablegram to Mr. Compers, of March 25, and his letter of March 27, to the Executive Committee of the Free Federation. The misleading statements were two in number, (1) that the laborers at Fajardo and Naguabo had made a strike "without first having submitted their demands to their employers and having tried to secure a just settlement through the aid of Mr. Roberts," and (2) that the Governor in his letter ignored the fact that there were thousands of workers on strike at some eight or ten different municipalities that are mentioned in the charge.

These charges have already been discussed and disproved. The laborers at Fajardo made no demands whatever upon their employers before engaging in the strike. The list of demands referred to by Mr. Fiz in his reply to the Governor's telegram is that contained in the printed circular sent out by the Free Federation September 7, 1917, which has already been discussed.

This printed circular was not prepared or sent out by the sugar workers or with their consent or even with their knowledge. It was the act of the Free Federation of Labor in which they are scarcely represented at all, and which does not and cannot control them.

As to the thousands of strikers in the various municipalities mentioned, they simply did not exist at that time or at any time during the

whole period. With the exception of Fajardo and Naguabo, as already stated, there was no considerable number of striking workmen at any time in any part of the island, not a sufficient number to interfere with the running of any of the sugar mills.

All of the charges incidentally made in the latter part of paragraph 8, are absolutely false. All of the incidental statements introduced into these charges are either entirely false or so grossly exaggerated as to have no relation to the truth.

The sugar industry is not largely owned by alien enemies. Not much over one per cent of this industry is so owned and that has been taken over by the Custodian of Alien Property.

It is not true that wages for adults among the sugar workers is as low as twenty-five cents per day or that the cost of living has increased as much as 100 per cent. All these statements are gross exaggerations of the actual facts. In short and in fine, all of the misleading statements throughout this controversy have been made by the labor agitators themselves and not by the Governor.

In conclusion a study of the facts shows conclusively that the whole strike movement this year among the cane workers was artificial in that it did not originate among the workers themselves or in any way represent their ideas or wishes. It failed because the cane workers of the island generally refused absolutely from start to finish to give it their support. It originated with the Free Federation of Labor, the leaders of which prepared the circular of September 7, and pushed and promoted the movement for a strike for a period of six months or more, but workers in general failed to show any interest and refused to cooperate.

When at last the Governor sent his letter of March 27 (Exhibit C) to the Executive Committee of the Free Federation of Labor declining to call a general conference, because among other reasons, there was no general strike or any strike movement in most parts of the island, Mr. Iglesias immediately issued a statement in the newspapers in which he declared that if a general strike was necessary for a general conference, he would soon show the Governor that there was a general strike. He immediately went to Arecibo and other places and attempted to create a general strike but he failed completely. He soon desisted from the effort and hurried to Washington to manufacture his false charges and try to throw the blame for his failure upon the Governor.

These are the facts.

#### GENERAL LABOR CONDITIONS

Labor conditions in Porto Rico are undoubtedly bad, and when compared to those in continental United States they appear to be very distressing. Wages are relatively low and housing conditions shocking. But the standards of life, character, intelligence and morality of the laborers are also low, and all these conditions have existed in Porto Rico for more than a century. They were inherited by the American administration from the Spanish régime and they cannot be remedied by any short or summary processes. The fundamental causes of these conditions were discussed by the present Governor in an address delivered before the Mohonk Conference, New York, in October 1915. In brief the fundamental cause lies in the enormous population of this island, 350 to the square mile, and in the fact that there are practically no manufacturing industries for the steady employment of the surplus labor.



Rapid improvement since the American occupation has been hindered by the continued natural increase of the population which has been even more rapid and continuous since the American occupation than before.

I wish to state however, that since the address of the Governor at Lake Mohonk in 1915, these conditions have markedly improved. While still far from ideal, there has been a notable change the last two years owing to the natural results of the great war. Wages have undoubtedly increased and there is far less unemployment in the dull season than heretofore. Those who deny this improvement are simply suffering from wilful blindness due to prejudice or political ambitions.

The improvement has been due chiefly to the following material causes:-

(1) Increased emigration of laborers from Porto Rico especially to the neighboring island of Santo Domingo, where the intervention of the American Government has made possible the development of industry. There has also been increased emigration to continental United States, Cuba, Venezuela and Haiti.

(2) Increase of opportunities for employment due to the expansion of the industries of the island, especially sugar and tobacco caused by the great war. For instance, the exportation of sugar increased 40 per cent in quantity and doubled in value in the two years 1915 to 1917.

Moreover there has been a large increase in food production caused by the necessities of the war and the propaganda of the Food Commission. All of this development has been reflected in the labor situation.

(3) Most important of all have been the military operations of the Federal Government in Porto Rico. The Porto Rican Regiment was completed and raised to war strength in 1916-17, and the recruiting of these men took 1,400 able-bodied workers from the fields and the towns. The formation of the three officers training camps and the calling of the first quota of the National Army have removed more than 15,000 more. The calling of the second quota which has now been ordered for next September will remove 15,000 more young men from ordinary employments.

It is quite clear that all of these influences combined operating in a small island like this must have had some effect upon labor conditions, and it is equally clear to an impartial observer that the effect has actually been produced and labor conditions have been changed for the better.

Along with these causes of improvement have constantly gone the efforts of the insular government through its various departments for the social uplift and betterment of the masses. The reach of the schools is wider and stronger, and their work more wisely directed towards practical ends than ever before. Especially is this true of the educational work in the rural communities. The Department of Health is constantly widening its facilities for guarding the health of all the people, and the new Department of Agriculture and Labor is perfecting its organization for the development of agriculture and assistance to the laborers. Labor legislation, notably the Workmen's Compensation Act and laws for the protection of women and children engaged as workers, has been passed and in many other ways the government of the island has sought to improve the condition of the laborers and the general welfare of the people.

The work of the Food Commission to increase local food production in cooperation with the schools and Department of Agriculture has been notably successful and I am confident will have happy and permanent results.

There is still however an abundance of labor in Porto Rico and this is the controlling factor in the whole situation, but there is not such a superabundance as there was two years ago; and when the second draft shall have been completed, there will probably be a still more marked improvement.

Some of the above remedial agencies are probably only temporary, but most of them I hope are permanent and will increase as time goes on.

There is one other matter pertinent to the labor situation that is at least hopeful and should be mentioned. For the last three years there has been a continuous decline in the rate of natural increase of the population. When I made my analysis of social conditions at Mohenk in 1916, I pointed out that according to our vital statistics there had been a steady annual increase of population for many years of two per cent and that in spite of the enormous population, this increase had been more rapid since the American occupation than before. This was the most sinister and discouraging feature of the whole situation at that time. But immediately the figures of the next year showed a diminution in the rate of increase. This was due both to a decrease of the number of births and also unfortunately to an increase in the number of deaths in spite of the sanitary work of the Department of Health. This was due in part doubtless to pressure of heavy population. This decline in

rate of increase in population has continued now for three years, 1916, 1917 and 1918, and the rate of annual increase has fallen from 2% in 1915 to less than 1 1/3% in 1918. It is too soon to conclude that the population curve has permanently changed its general direction and may soon reach its highest point. But it is inevitable that the rate of increase of population must at some time begin to slow down and it is at least possible that this time has already arrived.

It is most unfortunate that among the ameliorating agencies for the laboring masses of Porto Rico as a whole it is not possible to give a prominent place to the Free Federation of Labor. As stated above, however, this organization does not represent the agricultural workers at all, and as at present organized it is in reality a political party and seeks political rather than social ends. I have suggested the organization of local unions in the various centrals and local communities with committees of the workers to discuss with their employers the various matters in dispute as they arise. But the chief difficulty in this as in every other scheme of practical betterment lies in the utter illiteracy, ignorance and helplessness of the agricultural laborers, and this is a condition that will require time to remedy. However, I wish to repeat and emphasize that conditions are improving and perhaps as rapidly as it is reasonable to expect.

Trusting that the importance of this subject may serve as an excuse for the length of this letter, I am,

Very respectfully yours,

Governor.

The President of the United States,  
White House, Washington, D. C.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
PORTO RICO

The Filson Historical Society

San Juan, July 30-1918.

My dear Mr. President:

Sometime in the first half of July, 1918, I learned thru the newspapers of the country that Mr. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, had addressed to you a letter enclosing and endorsing charges against me made by Santiago Iglesias a labor leader of Porto Rico in connection with the labor conditions and strikes in this Island.

Mr. Gompers requested that a National Commission be sent to Porto Rico to make an investigation of the charges against myself and file a report with recommendations.

I have not received an official copy of the letter of Mr. Gompers and the attached documents; but "Justicia," a local paper issued in San Juan by Mr. Iglesias has published what purport to be copies of all these papers and I have deemed it proper to send you a brief reply to all these charges based upon this publication.

In the first place I wish to make absolute and unqualified denial of each and every one of the charges both in general and in particular. There is no truth whatever in any of them, and the statements and allegations introduced by way of proof are all without foundation or else so grossly exaggerated as to make them substantially untrue.

The first four of the charges as published seem to be identical and may be treated together. The general charge made and reiterated in these four numbered paragraphs is that I was unfriendly to the sugar laborers of Porto Rico during the strike movement which began in February, 1918, and continued throughout the month of March; and that I showed this unfriendliness by refusing to call or encourage meetings for composing the differences between the workers and their employers, and in so doing failed to abide by the declarations and instructions of the President of the United States and of the mediation commission appointed by him.

In making this general charge, Mr. Iglesias states ~~incorrectly~~ that there were at one time 26,000 striking workmen; that a large part of the sugar industry is owned by alien enemies, and that a great and serious loss in the production of sugar was caused thereby.

The charge is absolutely false. I deny it in the most positive terms. I have never refused to call a conference or meeting between committees of striking workers and their employers at any time when it was possible to do so or where there was any chance to accomplish any good for the laborers by such a meeting.

I did refuse during the period mentioned to call a general conference of all the mill owners and growers of sugar cane on the one hand and the leaders of the Free Federation of Labor on the other. I was requested to call such a conference during the progress of this controversy by Mr. Iglesias, the labor leader and organizer of the Free Federation, by Mr. F. C. Roberts the official Conciliator of the Department of Labor at Washington, and at last by Mr. Samuel Compers the

President of the American Federation of Labor. I considered this matter long and carefully for I was very anxious to secure some increase in wages and other advantages if possible for the sugar laborers. When in Washington I had had a conference on this general subject with Mr. Gompers, Mr. F. O. Roberts present. It was agreed in a general way at this conference that we should endeavor to secure an uninterrupted harvest of the sugar crop in Porto Rico this year, and that wherever disputes and controversies might arise between the laborers and their employers, we should endeavor to have them fairly settled by means of conferences between the parties. That Mr. Roberts who was coming down as a representative of the Federal Department of Labor would assist as a mediator in these conferences, and that I would cooperate in carrying out this policy by calling conferences wherever and whenever controversies and disputes should arise. This did not mean of course that I would attempt to call a general conference of all those engaged in the whole sugar industry throughout the island regardless of whether there were any disputes to settle or other conditions precedent to a conference. Nevertheless, I did consider frequently and seriously the calling of a general conference on the subject of labor conditions in the whole sugar industry, in order to secure some advantages for the laborers and make impossible any serious strike.

My general attitude on the subject may be seen from a circular letter issued to the police and officials of the municipalities under date of February 12, which is enclosed.

Finally however, I concluded that a general conference was impracticable for the following reasons:

(1) There was at no time any general strike or even a strike movement among the sugar workers



in most parts of the island. When the controversy was in its most acute stage there were never more than 10,000 cane workers on a strike and these were almost wholly confined to the north-eastern district of the island and affected only two mills - that at Fajardo and Naguabo. These two mills together have a capacity of about 30,000 tons of sugar out of the 500,000 tons produced by the whole island. And these two mills were not at anytime closed entirely, but for some three or four weeks were run with difficulty and at greatly reduced capacity. There were in a few other localities brief and sporadic efforts made to create strike conditions, but they were so unsupported by the workers that they were soon settled and the operation of no mills was ever seriously affected except the two mentioned.

(2) The cane workers over the island generally were and are entirely unorganized. They are practically not represented at all in the Free Federation of Labor. Only an insignificant per cent of the sugar workers of the whole island are members of this Federation, which consists chiefly of cigar makers, stevedores and skilled workers of the towns and cities. Consequently there were in existence at the time no committees of these laborers to meet and treat with their employers and, as stated above, no grievances or disputes in most places to discuss and settle.

(3) No demands or complaints had been submitted to the employers by their workers at any time either as to wages or other labor conditions.

Much stress is laid by Mr. Iglesias upon a so called list of grievances and demands which he claims was submitted to all the factories and sugar growers, and which was to serve as a basis of discussion by the proposed general conference.

This list of grievances, etc., was drawn up by the leaders of the Free Deferation of Labor on September 7, 1917, four months before the opening of the harvest season and before the price of sugar had been fixed by the Food Commission. It was drawn up without the knowledge or consent of the workers themselves. It was signed by the Secretary of the Free Federation, was printed as a circular and in this form sent to the sugar growers and mill owners in September. It was also sent to Mr. Compers with the request that he secure the endorsement of it by the Committee of the American Federation of Labor and the promise of strike benefits in case strikes resulted.

Neither in its origin or form could this circular be considered as a basis for a conference to settle a labor dispute, and it was ignored absolutely by all parties concerned, -by the mills and sugar growers, by Mr. Compers and by the cane workers themselves.

When the harvest season opened in January the mills began their grinding and the workers everywhere went to work as usual. Wages were undoubtedly increased in varying proportions, but absolutely no attention was paid to this circular. (Exhibit B.)

(4) Finally, to the above reasons must be added the fact that Mr. Iglesias is not only the leader and official organizer of the Free Federation of Labor in Porto Rico but he is also the leader and founder of a political party. He has transformed the Free Federation into the Socialist party and was himself elected Senator-at-Large at the last election by this new party whose principles and methods seem to be a combination of those of the Bolsheviki of Russia and of the I.W.W.'s. He hopes to organize all the agricultural laborers of Porto Rico and lead them thru the Federation of

labor into the Socialist party and so make of himself a powerful political factor in this little island.

For all these reasons it was manifestly impracticable to secure a general conference of all the sugar growers called together to meet a political leader and submit to him for settlement labor disputes which as far as nine-tenths of them were concerned did not exist with their own employees.

As proof of my general policy of calling a conference between committees of striking workers and their employers, I submit two instances both of which were connected with strikes in the cigar factories of the island. The cigarmakers are fairly well organized and most of them belong to the Federation of Labor. Since I came to Porto Rico there have been two serious and long-continued strikes in this industry. One of them occurred in 1914 and the other in the Fall of 1917. Both of these were finally amicably settled in conferences which I myself called. In the earlier case I submit two letters (Exhibits A and B) one dated June 5 and another dated June 8, 1914, when the conference was reported as about to fail, urging upon the conference the importance of making another effort to effect a settlement. I also submit letter of Mr. Press, Vice-President of the Cigar Company, dated June 11th (Exhibit H.), advising me of the settlement of this strike.

In the later case I wrote a letter under date of November 16, 1917, to the Vice-President of the Free Federation of Labor, which I submit (Exhibit J.). This letter initiated a conference which resulted in a satisfactory settlement, from which the workers secured important advantages. In many other instances I have made an effort usually by oral suggestions and personal interviews with employers and committees of the laborers, as in the case of the stevedores strike in 1916, and

the trolley strike in 1917, to bring the parties together for discussion and settlement of their differences. In some cases my efforts have been successful, in a few others, they have failed owing to an unwillingness of one or both parties to make concessions, but in no case have I ever failed or refused to employ this method whenever it was possible to do so.

I adopted this method this year also when the strike occurred at Pajardo and urged both sides to meet together with Mr. Roberts, the Commissioner of Conciliation, and try to reach a settlement. Both sides agreed to this and this conference should have taken place; but Mr. Roberts was sick for a few days and so did not go to Pajardo until it was too late to secure a conference. I enclose copy of telegram which I sent to Mr. Fis, one of the strike leaders at Pajardo, and Mr. Bird, manager of the sugar mill, and also the reply of Mr. Fis. (Exhibits C and D, respectively). Mr. Fis must have referred to the circular sent out in September (Exhibit E) as the basis of his statement that laborers had been trying for five months to secure concessions from their employers, for no other demand or complaint of any sort had ever been submitted by them to their employers.

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In support of this charge there was published some correspondence between Mr. Henry W. Dooley, former Chairman of the Porto Rican Chapter of the American Red Cross, and Mr. F. C. Roberts, Special Agent of the Federal Department of Labor. Both of these gentlemen it will be noticed committed the impropriety of meddling in local politics at a time when they were holding official positions which should have precluded such action; but it was far worse than an impropriety for them to give their support to charges that were utterly false and malicious, as all of them are.

I deny most emphatically every direct charge or insinuation contained in these letters.

As to my failure to aid in the organization and work of the American Red Cross in Porto Rico, it is perhaps sufficient for me to submit a copy of the Resolutions voluntarily and unanimously adopted by the Executive Committee of the Porto Rican Chapter of the American Red Cross June 3, 1918. This action was taken by the Committee almost immediately after the publication of the letters of Mr. Dooley at a meeting which was attended by all the members of the Committee. (See Exhibit M) except my wife and Mr. Dooley, and the last mentioned was present and participated in the discussion but did not vote on the roll call.

As to the Liberty Loan campaigns, the statements are utterly false and absurd, as everybody in Porto Rico conversant with the facts will certainly testify. Indeed at the very moment when these gentlemen were writing these letters of slander and at the very moment when Mr. Iglesias and Mr. Roberts were busy at Washington conducting their campaign of slander and abuse against the Governor, I was myself intensely occupied here in bringing to a triumphant conclusion the Third Liberty Loan campaign, with a total subscription of \$2,785,000. Altho this was not quite equal to the quota assigned to the island, it was far more

than was expected by any one in Porto Rico who was familiar with actual conditions.

In fact the showing made by Porto Rico in all three of the Liberty Loan campaigns, as in all other forms of war work has been entirely creditable to the loyalty and patriotism of the little island, when all the circumstances are fairly considered. A total of nearly five and one half million dollars has been subscribed to the three Liberty Loans. When it is remembered that ordinary investments yield in this island an average of ten per cent interest, it will be understood that a stronger appeal must be made to patriotism to secure subscriptions to four per cent bonds than in the United States. Moreover much of the wealth of the island is owned by Spanish subjects who naturally are not so open to this patriotic appeal as are our own citizens.

There are also many large American corporations doing business here which usually make their subscriptions to these loans either wholly or chiefly thru their home offices in the United States and leave the islanders to struggle along without their powerful aid. Still in spite of these handicaps the people here have done their best and they have done well. In all of these campaigns, owing to the peculiar customs and traditions of the people the governor has been compelled to give far more personal attention and leadership to these campaigns than the governor of any state or territory in the United States.

I will not take time in this letter to discuss Mr. Deoley's equally absurd charge that I delayed the organization of a local Council of National Defense, even after he had suggested it. It is thought by some residents of Porto Rico that it is absolutely necessary for us to copy immediately every form of private or semi-private organization that may be originated any where in the United States for any and every kind of war work. As a

matter of fact the people here are not so accustomed to the organization and management of these private associations, councils, and boards as are the people of our more experienced communities at home, and they are more in need of guidance and direction. And owing to their Spanish training they are strongly inclined to depend upon the Governor for leadership.

For instance, when the Food Commission was created by law in April 1917, the responsibility for the direction of all of its activities was placed directly upon the Governor. When the Four Minute Men was organized, it was found that in order to make it go well, the governor must assume the position of local Director. A large number of organizations have been launched and some of them are performing important work, as for example, the Women's Council for National Defense, but owing to lack of money and other reasons, there has not yet been formed the General Council for National Defense.

During the last 15 or 16 months the government of Porto Rico has been confronted with many complicated and perplexing problems. On March 3, 1917, the new organic act was approved which involved a complete reorganization of the local government. In about one month thereafter, the United States entered the great war. Very soon thereafter, the Selective Service Law was passed by Congress and applied to Porto Rico, and obligatory military service was laid upon these new made citizens who had never before conceived of such a thing. Swiftly followed the registration of the young men for which a complete machinery had to be created, prohibition of alcoholic liquors with its financial difficulties, officers training camps, cantonment building and encampments, etc., etc. And in all these great changes, new duties and responsibilities, the people of the island generally not understanding well the differentiation between govern-

ments and departments have looked to their Governor for direction and guidance, for the righting of every wrong, for the correction of every mistake and for the solution of every problem.

The record of achievement is written in the history of this memorable period. I appeal to it with confidence and will cheerfully abide by the result.

Charge No. 6 declares that I have "permitted the violation by officials of the island of fundamental rights of free assemblage, free speech, and free locomotion upon the highways, menacing with armed force the free and peaceful organization of labor upon the island of Porto Rico, for the lawful improvement of the standard of living."

This charge I emphatically deny. The officials of the island have not violated any of the fundamental rights of laborers of Porto Rico.

Freedom of speech and free locomotion upon the highways as guaranteed by the constitution and laws of Porto Rico have not been interfered with.

Free speech of course in all countries must have some limitations and responsibilities; but as wide liberties as were possible under the law have been constantly allowed the laborers and their speakers, all charges and allegations to the contrary notwithstanding. Unfortunately all of the leaders and speakers of the Free Federation habitually make all sorts of charges against the police and other officials of the government, which, upon investigation, prove to be either entirely false or so grossly distorted and exaggerated as to be substantially untrue. Scores of telegrams have poured into my office during this and previous strikes making charges of wrong-doing against both insular and local officials, and they have been thoroughly investigated by competent and impartial men and have been found almost universally to be absolutely untrue.



Only one kind of public meeting has been in any way curtailed or interfered with during this period, but that kind of assembly is in no sense a constitutional right, namely the so-called "manifestations" or parades along the roads. These are peculiar and intensive methods employed in this country, not of supporting a strike, but rather of creating strike conditions where none exist. A crowd is gathered in a town in a district where a strike is desired or has been declared by the Federation. In the crowd are some strikers, but in addition many loafers and idlers and some criminals, and preceded by an automobile containing speakers and with red flags and banners and horns they parade noisily along the roads through the cane fields and announce the strike to the workers in the fields bordering the roads and invite them to cease work. If the laborers continue to work, they are abused and vilified and threatened and sometimes forcibly pulled out of the fields. In general our experience shows that these parades lead to violence and disorder, to intimidation of those who wish to continue work and frequently to clashes between strikers and non-strikers and also between strikers or so-called strikers and the police. Moreover in the wake of these parades there usually follows a string of cane fires in the standing cane which destroy it.

The law of Porto Rico gives to the Municipalities, which include rural territory, the power to enact ordinances for the control of these parades. This year, owing to war conditions and the general desire not to encourage strikes that would interrupt the sugar harvest, the permits for these "manifestations", were not granted. Of course the police were instructed to enforce the law and not to allow these parades without permits from the local authorities. To this extent and to this extent only was there any interference with or any curtailment of any sort

of meetings or assemblies which the laborers desired to hold. In my judgment, under all the conditions existing at this time of war and difficulty, this much of precaution against certain disorder was entirely justified.

There is one other charge made in paragraph 7 and repeated in paragraph 8, that the Governor made misleading statements in his official telegram to Mr. Fiz, of March 12; his cablegram to Mr. Gompers, of March 25, and his letter of March 27, to the Executive Committee of the Free Federation. The misleading statements were two in number, (1) that the laborers at Fajardo and Naguabo had made a strike "without first having submitted their demands to their employers and having tried to secure a just settlement through the aid of Mr. Roberts," and (2) that the Governor in his letter ignored the fact that there were thousands of workers on strike at some eight or ten different municipalities that are mentioned in the charge.

These charges have already been discussed and disproved. The laborers at Fajardo made no demands whatever upon their employers before engaging in the strike. The list of demands referred to by Mr. Fiz in his reply to the Governor's telegram is that contained in the printed circular sent out by the Free Federation September 7, 1917, which has already been discussed.

This printed circular was not prepared or sent out by the sugar workers or with their consent or even with their knowledge. It was the act of the Free Federation of Labor in which they are scarcely represented at all, and which does not and cannot control them.

As to the thousands of strikers in the various municipalities mentioned, they simply did not exist at that time or at any time during the

whole period. With the exception of Fajardo and Naguabo, as already stated, there was no considerable number of striking workmen at any time in any part of the island, not a sufficient number to interfere with the running of any of the sugar mills.

All of the charges incidentally made in the latter part of paragraph 8, are absolutely false. All of the incidental statements introduced into these charges are either entirely false or so grossly exaggerated as to have no relation to the truth.

The sugar industry is not largely owned by alien enemies. Not much over one per cent of this industry is so owned and that has been taken over by the Custodian of Alien Property.

It is not true that wages for adults among the sugar workers is as low as twenty-five cents per day or that the cost of living has increased as much as 100 per cent. All these statements are gross exaggerations of the actual facts. In short and in fine, all of the misleading statements throughout this controversy have been made by the labor agitators themselves and not by the Governor.

In conclusion a study of the facts shows conclusively that the whole strike movement this year among the cane workers was artificial in that it did not originate among the workers themselves or in any way represent their ideas or wishes. It failed because the cane workers of the island generally refused absolutely from start to finish to give it their support. It originated with the Free Federation of Labor, the leaders of which prepared the circular of September 7, and pushed and promoted the movement for a strike for a period of six months or more, but workers in general failed to show any interest and refused to cooperate.

When at last the Governor sent his letter of March 27 (Exhibit G) to the Executive Committee of the Free Federation of Labor declining to call a general conference, because among other reasons, there was no general strike or any strike movement in most parts of the island, Mr. Iglesias immediately issued a statement in the newspapers in which he declared that if a general strike was necessary for a general conference, he would soon show the Governor that there was a general strike. He immediately went to Arecibo and other places and attempted to create a general strike but he failed completely. He soon desisted from the effort and hurried to Washington to manufacture his false charges and try to throw the blame for his failure upon the Governor.

These are the facts.

#### GENERAL LABOR CONDITIONS

Labor conditions in Porto Rico are undoubtedly bad, and when compared to those in continental United States they appear to be very distressing. Wages are relatively low and housing conditions shocking. But the standards of life, character, intelligence and morality of the laborers are also low, and all these conditions have existed in Porto Rico for more than a century. They were inherited by the American administration from the Spanish régime and they cannot be remedied by any short or summary processes. The fundamental causes of these conditions were discussed by the present Governor in an address delivered before the Mohonk Conference, New York, in October 1915. In brief the fundamental cause lies in the enormous population of this island, 350 to the square mile, and in the fact that there are practically no manufacturing industries for the steady employment of the surplus labor.

Rapid improvement since the American occupation has been hindered by the continued natural increase of the population which has been even more rapid and continuous since the American occupation than before.

I wish to state however, that since the address of the Governor at Lake Mohonk in 1915, these conditions have markedly improved. While still far from ideal, there has been a notable change the last two years owing to the natural results of the great war. Wages have undoubtedly increased and there is far less unemployment in the dull season than heretofore. Those who deny this improvement are simply suffering from wilful blindness due to prejudice or political ambitions.

The improvement has been due chiefly to the following material causes:-

(1) Increased emigration of laborers from Porto Rico especially to the neighboring island of Santo Domingo, where the intervention of the American Government has made possible the development of industry. There has also been increased emigration to continental United States, Cuba, Venezuela and Haiti.

(2) Increase of opportunities for employment due to the expansion of the industries of the island, especially sugar and tobacco caused by the great war. For instance, the exportation of sugar increased 40 per cent in quantity and doubled in value in the two years 1915 to 1917.

Moreover there has been a large increase in food production caused by the necessities of the war and the propaganda of the Food Commission. All of this development has been reflected in the labor situation.

(3) Most important of all have been the military operations of the Federal Government in Porto Rico. The Porto Rican Regiment was completed and raised to war strength in 1916-17, and the recruiting of these men took 1,400 able-bodied workers from the fields and the towns. The formation of the three officers training camps and the calling of the first quota of the National Army have removed more than 13,000 more. The calling of the second quota which has now been ordered for next September will remove 15,000 more young men from ordinary employments.

It is quite clear that all of these influences combined operating in a small island like this must have had some effect upon labor conditions, and it is equally clear to an impartial observer that the effect has actually been produced and labor conditions have been changed for the better.

Along with these causes of improvement have constantly gone the efforts of the insular government through its various departments for the social uplift and betterment of the masses. The reach of the schools is wider and stronger, and their work more wisely directed towards practical ends than ever before. Especially is this true of the educational work in the rural communities. The Department of Health is constantly widening its facilities for guarding the health of all the people, and the new Department of Agriculture and Labor is perfecting its organization for the development of agriculture and assistance to the laborers. Labor legislation, notably the Workmen's Compensation Act and laws for the protection of women and children engaged as workers, has been passed and in many other ways the government of the island has sought to improve the condition of the laborers and the general welfare of the people.

The work of the Food Commission to increase local food production in cooperation with the schools and Department of Agriculture has been notably successful and I am confident will have happy and permanent results.

There is still however an abundance of labor in Porto Rico and this is the controlling factor in the whole situation, but there is not such a superabundance as there was two years ago; and when the second draft shall have been completed, there will probably be a still more marked improvement.

Some of the above remedial agencies are probably only temporary, but most of them I hope are permanent and will increase as time goes on.

There is one other matter pertinent to the labor situation that is at least hopeful and should be mentioned. For the last three years there has been a continuous decline in the rate of natural increase of the population. When I made my analysis of social conditions at Mohonk in 1925, I pointed out that according to our vital statistics there had been a steady annual increase of population for many years of two per cent and that in spite of the enormous population, this increase had been more rapid since the American occupation than before. This was the most sinister and discouraging feature of the whole situation at that time. But immediately the figures of the next year showed a diminution in the rate of increase. This was due both to a decrease of the number of births and also unfortunately to an increase in the number of deaths in spite of the sanitary work of the Department of Health. This was due in part doubtless to pressure of heavy population. This decline in

rate of increase in population has continued now for three years, 1916, 1917 and 1918, and the rate of annual increase has fallen from 2% in 1915 to less than 1 1/3% in 1918. It is too soon to conclude that the population curve has permanently changed its general direction and may soon reach its highest point. But it is inevitable that the rate of increase of population must at some time begin to slow down and it is at least possible that this time has already arrived.

It is most unfortunate that among the ameliorating agencies for the laboring masses of Porto Rico as a whole, it is not possible to give a prominent place to the Free Federation of Labor. As stated above, however, this organization does not represent the agricultural workers at all, and as at present organized it is in reality a political party and seeks political rather than social ends. I have suggested the organization of local unions in the various centrals and local communities with committees of the workers to discuss with their employers the various matters in dispute as they arise. But the chief difficulty in this as in every other scheme of practical betterment lies in the utter illiteracy, ignorance and helplessness of the agricultural laborers, and this is a condition that will require time to remedy. However, I wish to repeat and emphasize that conditions were improving and perhaps as rapidly as it is reasonable to expect.

Trusting that the importance of this subject may serve as an excuse for the length of this letter, I am,

Very respectfully yours,

Governor.

The President of the United States,  
White House, Washington, D. C.



July 31, 1918.

My dear Mr. President:

You have already probably received or if not you will receive very soon the papers in connection with 1st Lieutenant Pedro Hernandez of the Porto Rico Regiment of Infantry stationed at Panama who has been tried by Court Martial of his regiment and it is understood here has likely been sentenced to dismissal from the service.

I know little of the young man himself and almost nothing of the charges and circumstances connected with his trouble. I am writing, therefore, simply on behalf of his father, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Porto Rico, and of the family here in the Island, all of whom I know well and for whom I have the highest regard and sympathy.

The Chief Justice, not only on account of his high position but also because of his age and personal character and long and honorable service as a judge both under the Spanish and American administrations in Porto Rico, enjoys the greatest respect of the whole people.

It is most unfortunate that in cases of this sort much of the penalty falls upon the innocent members of the family as well as upon the wrongdoer himself, and I am writing simply to plead with you that if it be possible before this sentence is approved that it might be mitigated in some way so as to soften the blow to the honor of the venerable judge himself and his family and at the same time protect the interests of the Army. I am sure that if such a course may be discovered and chosen in this particular case it would meet with the approval of all who are familiar with the circumstances.

I trust that you will pardon the liberty that I am taking of addressing you upon this matter, and assuring you of my highest personal esteem, I am

Sincerely your friend,

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
White House, Washington, D.C.

SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO, U.S.A., August 17-- That the Commission to investigate labor and economic conditions in Porto Rico, which will be appointed by President Wilson, will not in any way make an investigation of Governor Yager and his administration is learned here on good authority and it is said that this decision was reached by Secretary of War Baker.

When Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, some weeks ago presented to President Wilson charges against the Governor as made by Senator Santiago Iglesias, representative of the American Federation of Labor in Porto Rico, newspapers published the statement that Mr. Gompers had demanded Governor Yager's removal because of his alleged unfriendly attitude toward island labor.

If such a demand were ever made there has been no indication here that it was ever given serious consideration by either President Wilson or Secretary Baker, for the Governor has never been officially advised that any charges had been preferred against him and in fact has been advised through the Bureau of Insular Affairs of the War Department that the charges were not considered of sufficient importance to forward him a copy.

Nevertheless, labor representatives in the island are still working against the Governor and during the absence in the United States of Santiago Iglesias the work here is being conducted by Prudencio Rivera Martinez, president of the Cigarmakers Union, and in charge of Federación Libre headquarters during the absence of Iglesias. Yesterday Rivera said that everything possible was being done to have Governor Yager removed from Porto Rico.

As a part of the campaign against Governor Yager which the labor unions of the island are conducting there was recently sent to a large number of newspapers in the United States a new story under San Juan date which carried this heading, "One Million Porto Ricans ask President Wilson to Select a Good Governor; They say Conditions are Unbearable." The story proper then goes on to say:

San Juan, P.R., August. --Thousands of Porto Ricans all over the island are holding meetings and signing petitions requesting President Wilson to select Governor of Arizona, the Hon. Geo. W. P. Hunt, as Governor of Porto Rico.

The trade unionists and fraternal societies are taking active part in the campaign. It has been stated here that the labor unions of the states and President Compara of the American Federation of Labor will favor the stand

taken by the Porto Ricans. The unfortunate workers of the Island complain that local authorities have denied them every right guaranteed under the Porto Rico Organic Act, and that strikes have been suppressed; strikers being cuffed and jailed when they suspended work to enforce a living wage. Thousand of these workers employed in raising and manufacturing sugar are being paid wage of 65 cents for ten hours work. The women get an average of 45 cents and the children 30 cents per day.

The workers of the Island and the people in general are very pleased with the news received from Washington regarding the appointment of a Commission by President Wilson to investigate the deplorable economic and industrial conditions that prevail down here. The people of Porto Rico want a fundamental change in the public affairs of the country.

As a COLONY, Porto Rico is a factory worked out by industrial serfs. The 70% of the wealth created by the Porto Ricans workers is going out of the country to absentee profiteers.

In accordance with the Organic Act approved recently by Congress the Porto Ricans are declared citizens of the United States, but a more recent decision of the United

States Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution of the Nation does not apply to the people of Porto Rico; notwithstanding more than 120,000 islanders have been drafted and more than fourteen thousand are now in active military service. There are 300,000 children of school age who can but read or write and have no school accommodations, and it is claimed that the number is increasing because of low wage standards.

The boasted prosperity of Porto Rico proclaimed officially by the sugar and tobacco trusts and allied interests, is shown to be a prosperity for the few.

No one can describe the pitiable conditions of these poor people, while it is generally conceded that this year was the banner year for the employers. No doubt some of them will clear more than 65%, still they could not afford to increase the wage of the men who created their wealth.

The petition to President Wilson reads as follows:

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

We, the undersigned, citizens of the island of Porto Rico have abiding faith in your declarations of democracy, especially wherein you have declared that it "can be realized only by the determination of what the thinking

peoples of the world desire, with their longing for justice and for social freedom and for opportunity."

"Social Freedom and industrial opportunity are today non-existent for the mass of the people of Porto Rico as has been plainly set forth by General McIntyre, Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, in these words:

"The unfortunate conditions of the agricultural workers in Porto Rico and of the much more numerous and more unfortunate agricultural people in Porto Rico, who can not work because the work is not there for them, have been officially set forth in the reports of Governors of Porto Rico, in the hearings before Congress, since the report of the first Military Governor on American occupation of Porto Rico. The facts which would be developed by an inquiry would show conditions much worse than they are painted by Mr. Iglesias, for the reason that Mr. Iglesias' present interest is in the sugar workers, who even at the low wage they are receiving are of the relative fortunate class in Porto Rico.

These things being so, and the appointment of a governor for the Island of Porto Rico by you being called for by the Organic Act of Porto Rico sometime during the year

1918, we do most respectfully petition you to appoint to the said office of governor the Hon. Geo. W. P. Hunt, now Governor of the State of Arizona, whose reputation officially and unofficially for fair sympathetic relations with the Spanish-speaking peoples of his state, and the English-speaking workers as well, is of the highest.

It is our conviction that the critical conditions of affairs in the Island of Porto Rico calls for the appointment by you of a man who has already made a public record of his friendly, fair and just dealings with the working people and the people in general in their longing for justice and for social freedom and for opportunity in the State of Arizona.

The situation in Porto Rico is being used to the discredit of our Republic in Spanish-speaking countries. The story of injustice in Porto Rico has already been carried to the Spanish speaking people of North and South America, and even to Europe.

The United States Government, which is now in a war against the principles of autocracy and denial of human rights, can not longer remain responsible for a condition

in territory over which it has jurisdiction, which is totally at variance with the ideals and institutions for which our government and our nation have declared."

When asked about this story Rivera Martinez said that so far approximately 8,000 signatures had been obtained to petitions which are now being circulated. He estimated that 50,000 signatures will be obtained within a few weeks. He said that it was not the intention to circulate the petitions among workers only but that fraternal and other organizations should be asked to take the matter up. He said members of the legislature and others had signed the petition. He said further that Gov. Hunt, of Arizona, was considered as a desirable man for the governor of Porto Rico because of his known attitude toward labor.

Despite the activity of the organized labor element here to have Governor Yager removed there is no indication whatever that officials at Washington have taken at all seriously any of the charges made against the Governor. On the other hand there is every reason to believe that the administration of Governor Yager has met with the approval of his superiors at Washington <sup>and</sup> that it is not considered at Washington that there is anything connected with the Gov-



ernor's administration that is not commendable.

Ever since Governor Yager first came to Porto Rico there has been a widening breach between himself and Santiago Iglesias, the island's labor leader, caused originally, it is generally believed here, by the failure of the Governor to show Iglesias any special consideration. Locally and in the United States proper the attacks of Iglesias on the Governor have been more and more bitter until he finally took the matter to President Wilson through Samuel Gompers.

Governor Yager and Iglesias agree on one thing, that laboring conditions in the island are deplorable. Iglesias puts all the blame on the Governor, while Governor Yager asserts that the causes for present conditions are a century old and cannot be remedied overnight. The Governor himself, early in his administration, called attention to the unfavorable economic conditions here when he spoke exhaustively on the subject at the Lake Mohonk Conference in 1915.

In talking of general labor conditions in Porto Rico with the correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor on Thursday, Governor Yager said:-

"Labor conditions in Porto Rico are undoubtedly

bad, and when compared with continental United States they appear to be very distressing. Wages are relatively low and housing conditions are shocking. But the standards of life, character, intelligence and morality of the laborers are also low, and all these conditions have existed in Porto Rico for more than a century. They were inherited by the American administration from the Spanish regime and they cannot be remedied by any short or summary processes. The fundamental causes of these conditions were discussed by me in an address at Lake Mohonk in October, 1915, and in brief the fundamental cause lies in the enormous population of the island, more than 350 to the square mile, and in the fact that there are practically no manufacturing industries for the steady employment of the surplus labor.

"Rapid improvement since the American occupation has been hindered by the continued natural increase of the population which has been even more rapid and continuous since the American occupation than before.

"However, since 1915, these conditions have markedly improved. While still far from ideal there has been a notable change in the past two years owing to the natural results of the great war. Wages have undoubtedly increased and there is far less unemployment in the dull season than

ers from the fields and the towns. The formation of the three officers training camps and the calling of the first quota of the National Army have removed more than 13,000 more. The calling of the second quota, ordered for September, will remove 15,000 more young men from ordinary employment.

"It is clear that all of these influences combined operating in a small island must have had some effect upon labor conditions, and it is equally clear to an impartial observer that the effect has actually been produced and labor conditions have been changed for the better.

"Along with these causes of improvement have constantly gone the efforts of the insular government through its various departments for the social uplift and betterment of the masses. The reach of the schools is wider and stronger, and their work more wisely directed toward practical ends than ever before. Especially is this true of the educational work in the rural communities. The department of health is constantly widening its facilities for guarding the health of all the people and the new department of agriculture and labor is perfecting its organization for the development of agriculture and assistance to the laborers. Labor legislation notably the workmen's compensation act and laws for the

protection of the women and children engaged as workers, have been passed and in many other ways the government of the island has sought to improve the condition of the laborers and the general welfare of the people. The work of the Food Commission to increase local food production has had happy and permanent results from which labor has benefited.

"There is still an abundance of labor in Porto Rico and this is the controlling factor in the whole situation, but there is not such a superabundance as there was two years ago and after the second draft there will probably be still further improvement.

"There is one other matter pertinent to the labor situation that is hopeful. For the past three years there has been a continuous decline in the rate of natural increase of population. This decline in rate of increase has continued now for three years and the rate of annual increase has fallen from 2% in 1915 to less than 1 1/3% in 1918.

"It is unfortunate that among the ameliorating agencies for the laboring masses as a whole it is not possible to give a prominent place to the Free Federation of Labor. This organization does not represent the agricultural laborers at all and as at present organized it is in reality a political

arty and seeks political rather than social ends. I  
have suggested the organisation of local unions with  
committees to discuss with their employers, matters of  
dispute as they arise. The chief difficulty in this  
as in every other scheme of practical betterment lies in  
the utter illiteracy, ignorance and helplessness of the  
agricultural laborers, and this is a condition that will  
require time to remedy."

COPY:AS.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



August 20, 1918.

My dear Governor:

I have your letter of July 30th reviewing the recent agitation in Porto Rico, which resulted in the charges already disposed of.

I am sending your letter to the War Department in order that it will be of record. You have, however, already been assured that we were entirely satisfied with the manner in which you have done your duty in these matters.

The commission which is to be sent to Porto Rico will, it is hoped, serve to clear up matters and make suggestions looking to the betterment of the economic situation.

I am,

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "Woodrow Wilson".

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

(COPY)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington

August 20, 1918.

My dear Governor:

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I am,

Very sincerely,

(Signed) WOODROW WILSON

Hon. Arthur Yager,

Governor of Porto Rico,

San Juan.

Washington, D.C.,

March 4, 1919.

My dear Mr. President:

Señora Herminia Diaz, the widow of a prominent lawyer of Porto Rico, has in her possession a very handsome gold pen.

She desires me to present this pen to you with the suggestion that you might use it in signing the Peace Treaty or some important document connected with the peace now negotiating at Paris, and then keep the pen for yourself as a souvenir of this most momentous event and of your important connection with it. I am sending you the pen in the hope that you may find it convenient to gratify the aspirations of this estimable Porto Rican lady.

I will appreciate it if you will communicate to me, at your convenience, your decision in the matter in order that I may communicate it to Señora Diaz.

Very sincerely yours,

Governor of Porto Rico.

The President,

The White House.

Inclosure.



September 17, 1919.

Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

Knowing how terribly busy you have been for the last year about matters of the greatest importance to our country and to the world, I have refrained from obtruding upon your attention any matters connected with the Government of Porto Rico.

I am now writing however about the one matter of supreme importance, in my judgment, to this island, and that is the necessity of speeding up the work of education for the people of Porto Rico. In my last message to the local legislature I treated of this matter especially, and made a strong appeal to them to make still further sacrifices and increase the local appropriations largely. This was done, and I think that now the island is doing all that could reasonably be expected, from a local point of view, to increase the number and efficiency of the schools, schoolhouses and teachers. Nevertheless the need is so great, and the accumulated illiteracy and ignorance due to neglect of this matter in years long past, is so vast, that

it is quite impossible for the island unaided to make sufficiently rapid progress in educating her people to meet the demands of the present age. I am therefore, asking Federal assistance in this specific matter. The Commissioner of Education of Porto Rico and myself have addressed a petition to Congress for an appropriation of two millions of dollars annually, to be expended during a series of years under Federal agencies and in cooperation with the local Government, to educate American citizens in Porto Rico, and the Secretary of War very kindly addressed a letter to you several weeks ago, asking that you make a special recommendation in your forthcoming message to Congress covering this important matter.

I am writing now to add my own personal and urgent request to that of the Secretary of War, that you make such a recommendation.

The chief problem in Porto Rico at present is not political. In the new Organic Act, Congress has practically solved the political problem for the present, and in my judgment, no further steps should be taken in that direction right now, excepting of course, the recommendation that I have already made through the Secretary of War, that Mr. Jaime Sifre, Jr., a native son of Porto Rico, be appointed to the position of Attorney General for the island. I think that this would

be a safe and proper recognition of the splendid record made by the people of Porto Rico during the war. But the great unsolved problem still remains, that is, the social problem, the elevation of the masses of the people, especially the workers, in their standards of living, and to this end the absolutely indispensable requisite, even for a beginning of real progress, is their education. We must reduce the vast amount of illiteracy and ignorance of these American citizens, we must also teach them the English language, give them vocational training, so as to enlarge their opportunities for better wages and for general improvement of character and living conditions. The time is opportune for this appeal and I am very hopeful, in fact, almost confident that Congress will respond to this appeal in some fashion. I would be still more confident if you would be good enough to include this subject amongst those recommended for special consideration in your forthcoming message to be addressed to the regular session.

In conclusion, I desire to congratulate you personally upon the incalculable service you have rendered to our great country, and to all the world by your work and leadership in negotiating the Treaty of Peace and the League of Nations. I still believe that that work will be ratified by the American Senate and the American people without any very serious modifications.

Assuring you of the highest personal esteem,  
and confidence and friendship, I am

Sincerely your friend,

Governor of Porto Rico.

The Filson Historical Society

March 2, 1920.

My dear Mr. President:

I had a brief conference two or three weeks ago with the Congressional Committee, going to the Virgin Islands. I have learned also from other sources that the Navy Department desires to withdraw its officers from their duties in this archipelago, and from all this I infer that there is likely soon to take place either some change in the form of government of these islands, or in the appointment of the governor. In fact, I think that changes are so necessary that they will have to be made very soon. I am writing therefore to make some recommendations, which I hope may be useful to you when you take up this matter for consideration.

In the first place, in my judgment, the Virgin Islands do not require a military government of any sort. The inhabitants consist almost wholly as you know, of poor, illiterate, helpless, peaceful negro peasants, and the resources of the islands are so slender that it is a most difficult problem to find employment for the people without

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the expenditure of large sums from the outside. What is needed most is a careful business management by civilian administrators with ability and experience, so as to develop both the islands and the people in order that they might become self-supporting, and the first requisite, in my judgment, is a capable experienced business man of broad sympathies and humane instincts, as governor. I am confident that a man of this sort would be found in Mr. M. R. Spelman, of New York. Mr. Spelman is not a politician or a political man, though he is a Democrat of long standing and a loyal supporter of his party and of your administration. He is a business man of broad and successful experience—most of it in connection with enterprises which he has himself developed from small beginnings to successful proportions. He knows already a good deal about the Virgin Islands, having visited the islands two or three times during the Great War, as the agent of the Alien Property Custodian. He has original ideas in connection with the development of these islands which seem to me to be eminently wise and worthy of trial. I should be very glad to see him undertake the difficult task. While he is not a young man he is strong and capable

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and I consider him better fitted for the position than any man I know.

I have watched your struggle with your illness with the greatest possible concern as announcements were made in the newspapers. I notice with the greatest pleasure that you seem now to have so far recovered as to be able to work again with something of your old time vigor. Nothing has happened since the signing of the Armistice that could bring me more joy than to see you once more in complete health and back on the job with your usual force and wisdom. There was never a time when you were needed more by our party, our country and the world.

Wishing for you the greatest of all blessings, health and strength, I am, as always

Your devoted friend,

The Honorable Woodrow Wilson,  
President of the United States,  
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San Juan, Porto Rico  
November 8, 1920.

The Honorable Warren G. Harding,  
Marion, Ohio.

My dear Senator:

In the first place I desire to congratulate you most heartily upon the overwhelming results of the remarkable campaign in which you were elected President of the United States, and to wish for you a most successful administration.

In the second place I noticed in the press dispatches that you are contemplating a trip in the near future to Panama for rest and recuperation. If you make this trip, as I hope you will, you will pass very near to Porto Rico either on the outward trip or the return, and I wish to extend to you in the name of the government and the people of Porto Rico the most cordial invitation to call at San Juan and give to yourself and party an opportunity to see the island. You could arrange the length of your stay here entirely to suit your convenience, and we would also be glad to leave to your own choice the employment of your time while here. I feel sure that a brief stay would be both profitable and enjoyable and it would be appreciated by the whole people of the island as both an honor and a pleasure.

With the sincerest good wishes and highest personal regard I am,

Sincerely yours,

United States Senate, P.F.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Marion, Ohio,  
November 18, 1920.

Hon. Arthur Yager,  
Government House,  
San Juan, Porto Rico.

Dear Governor Yager:

Your letter of the 6th instant to Senator Harding has arrived during his absence from home, he having left on the date of your letter. He is today sailing for Panama where he will arrive on November 23rd, sailing from there on his return trip about the 28th, and arriving at Norfolk, Virginia December 4th. I understand that his return trip will take him through the Windward Passage, but I do not believe he contemplates stopping at Porto Rico for, indeed, his time is too limited for anything more than merely making the port of call.

You may reach him by wireless either at Colon or on the sea.

Permit me, however, to thank you for your kind invitation to Senator and Mrs. Harding.

Yours very truly,

*H. W. Marington*

Assistant Secretary.

M/y

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San Juan, March 29, 1921.

The Honorable Warren G. Harding,  
President of the United States,  
White House, Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

After repeating my congratulations upon your election and inauguration, I desire to lay before you a brief statement of the political conditions in Porto Rico and my own personal relations to them as Governor of the island.

As you doubtless know, I have held the position of Governor for more than seven years, having been appointed in November 1913. The tenure of the office is indefinite, or in the language of the Organic Act, the Governor "shall hold his office at the pleasure of the President and until his successor is chosen and qualified."

This places the matter entirely in your hands, but I assure you that I would not, even if I could, seek to limit in the slightest degree your freedom of action as to the time or manner of appointing a new Governor if you desire to do so.

On the other hand, in view of the language quoted above, and in view of the somewhat difficult political conditions now existing in the island, I deem it my duty to continue to perform the duties of Governor until the time when you may be ready to name my successor. Otherwise I fear that you might find it necessary to take somewhat hurried action in filling an actual vacancy in an office which is of sufficient impor-

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tance and difficulty to require more than usual consideration.

From an administrative point of view the present is not a convenient time to make a change in the office of Governor. The Legislature is now holding its regular biennial session and will not adjourn until some time in June, and the fiscal year closes June 30. The coming of a new executive during the legislative session would certainly interrupt very seriously the work of legislation; and the preparation of the annual report which will occupy August and September would seem most appropriately to belong to the Governor who presided over the work of the year to which it relates. It was probably for these reasons that the term of Governor Colton, who was the only one of my predecessors to fill out his term, began and ended in November and that my own service began in that month.

You have doubtless already been made aware of the somewhat tense political situation now existing in the island. At the last election on November 2, 1920, there were three local parties in the field. (1) The Unionist party which has carried the island by a large majority at every election since 1904; (2) The Republican party which claims some sort of an affiliation with the Republican party on the continent; <sup>and</sup> (3) the Socialist party, a radical labor party under leaders of extreme economic views. <sup>two</sup> The/last named parties, although they had nothing in common save a desire to win, made a com-

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The tenseness of the present situation is caused by the feeling which exists here that the local Republicans are now endeavoring through the appointing power at Washington to reverse the results of this election and secure the appointment of a Governor who will recognize themselves as the controlling party. The great powers possessed by the Governor in appointing local officials and in gaining and checking legislation furnish a reasonable ground for the feeling that he might endeavor to reverse the results of the election, and by doing so bring about a dead-lock between the Legislative and Executive departments which would paralyse the whole government.

All of these matters are submitted for your consideration without any feeling of personal interest, but simply with a desire to aid you in discharging your responsibility in regard to Porto Rico at this time.

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I am also taking the liberty of sending you, under separate cover a copy of my Message to the present Legislature, and a brief account of the first "Twenty Years of Progress in Porto Rico under American Administration."

I will most cheerfully give you any further information or assistance in my power that might aid you in reaching a decision in this matter; and upon the receipt of any suggestion that you are ready to have me do so I will promptly send you my resignation. For obvious reasons I would naturally appreciate as much time to prepare for the change as circumstances may permit.

Wishing for you, Mr. President, a most successful administration of your great office and assuring you of the highest personal esteem, I am,

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Wishing for you, Mr. President, a most successful administration of your great office and assuring you of the highest personal esteem, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

April 9, 1921.

My dear Governor Yager:

I am in receipt of your esteemed favor of March twenty-ninth, and have been very much interested in a deliberate reading of the contents thereof.

It is very considerate of you to place before me the information which your letter conveys, and I know it shall prove helpful to me in such official action as I am called upon to take.

There will be no hurry in making a change of executives for the island. The new administration here would not want to do anything to embarrass the situation there or, to in any way impede the making of new legislation effective. I think I need not assure you that the administration is anxious to promote <sup>a</sup> feeling of confidence and good-will rather than to add in any way to dissension among the citizenship of the island.

I hope I shall find time for a reading of your message and your account of the progress made under twenty years of American administration. I am immensely interested in the affairs of the insular possessions of the United States and am grateful to you for placing all this information before me.

I need not say to you that I greatly appreciate your expression of good wishes.

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*(Signed) Warren G. Harding*

*Hon. Arthur Yager  
Executive Mansion  
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The Filson Historical Society



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My dear Governor Yager:

I am in receipt of your esteemed favor of March twenty-ninth, and have been very much interested in a deliberate reading of the contents thereof.

It is very considerate of you to place before me the information which your letter conveys, and I know it shall prove helpful to me in such official action as I am called upon to take.

There will be no hurry in making a change of executives for the island. The new administration here would not want to do anything to embarrass the situation there or, to in any way impede the making of new legislation effective. I think I need not assure you that the administration is anxious to promote <sup>a</sup> feeling of confidence and good-will rather than to add in any way to dissension among the citizenship of the island.

I hope I shall find time for a reading of your message and your account of the progress made under twenty years of American administration. I am immensely interested in the affairs of the insular possessions of the United States and am grateful to you for placing all this information before me.

I need not say to you that I greatly appreciate your expression of good wishes.

Very sincerely yours,

Signed "

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

April 9, 1921.

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Woodrow Wilson

WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

April 9, 1931.

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2.  
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Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Warren G. Harding

Hon. Arthur Yager  
Executive Mansion  
San Juan, Porto Rico.

The Filson Historical Society