

GOVERNMENT OF PORTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, CHARITIES
AND CORRECTION
BUREAU OF LABOR
SAN JUAN, P. R.

Notes.

- ① Points 2 to 5 discussed generally. Bureau of labor has data for concrete description of these matters in each section.
- ② Tables of wages not yet finished. Completed table will be sent later by Mr. Honori.

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Rico will know how to show their appreciation to you.

May God direct the ship that carries you and may he give you happiness and contentment in your absence, and may he also bring you back soon to this land, that you may continue your labor for its happiness.

By the Committee,

Joaquín E. Barreiro

President.

The Filson Historical Society

La Correspondencia, November 19, 1914.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESS.

To the Honorable Arthur Yager,
Governor of Porto Rico.

Sir:-

It is sweet and proper to show to the benefactors of our land that in the heart of each of the sons of Porto Rico there is place to hold a feeling of gratitude and sympathy for them.

You have very deservedly occupied that place, through your conduct, and through your actions on behalf of our land; and the people of San Juan wish to show to you today with this civic parade ^{their} ~~its~~ sympathy and ~~the~~ adherence to you, and also that ^{they} ~~it~~ knows how to appreciate your frank and sincere efforts on behalf of our land.

You are leaving this Island today bound for the North. We wish you all sorts of happiness in your trip and we ask you that you may continue your labor on behalf of our contry, and that you may see it fit to recommend a capable Porto Rican to hold the position of Attorney General of Porto Rico, which is at present vacant.

Continue Honorable Governor on the path that you have started and do not doubt that the People of Porto

MEMORANDUM OF THE QUESTIONS IN DISPUTE DURING THE RECENT STRIKE
OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABORERS IN THE SUGAR CANE INDUSTRY.

The matters complained of and discussed by the strikers were:

- 1.- Low wages.
- 2.- Improper payment of wages at stores.
- 3.- The ajuste system.
- 4.- The system of agregados, i.e. laborers living in houses owned by their employers, and
- 5.- A shorter working day.

It is extremely difficult to gather accurate data upon the earnings of laborers employed in this industry, because thousands of them work by ajuste, and neither the contractor nor the employer has any records of the daily earnings of the individual laborers. Also laborers employed by ajuste work irregularly, so that it is difficult, even when the daily or weekly wages can be obtained, to know whether or not those wages represent a full day's or full week's working time. The plan of investigation has been to go to three or four of the most important colonos of each section and get such information from their payrolls as they had, and then to go out into the fields and talk with the laborers with the purpose of corroborating and supplementing this information. This work is not complete, but such data as has been gathered is shown in the following table.

(t a b l e)

The second complaint, that wages should be paid in lawful money and not in metal disks or paste-board checks, and that laborers should not be permitted to run credit accounts at stores owned by the employer or in which the employer guarantees the payment of the purchases made by his employees, is an important and exceedingly difficult problem. The Bureau of Labor has made investigations of many of these cases during the past year, but it

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has not been possible to prove a technical violation of the existing law. The Bureau of Labor proposed an amendment to this law at the last session of the Legislature which died in the House. That great injustice is frequently practiced upon illiterate laborers through this means is certain.

Employers have a right to issue evidences of indebtedness from day to day or from week to week, where it would not be reasonable to expect them to have on hand a large amount in cash, and where such evidences of indebtedness are redeemable in lawful money at reasonable times and places. Of the principle there cannot be any criticism. The trouble is, however, that the laborers need ready cash from day to day and frequently sell these evidences of indebtedness at tremendous discounts before the arrival of the regular payday, at which time they could exchange them for lawful money. The system of giving such metal or paste-board evidences of indebtedness is frequently connected with the store-credit system, the employer giving these disks or cards to laborers showing the amount of money which they have earned, and the laborers taking them to the store belonging to the employer or with which the employer has an arrangement where he is permitted to make purchases with them. Upon payday, of course, the employer redeems these disks or checks, paying the storekeeper their face value in lawful money. Usually, however, no disks or checks are given by the employer but the laborers are allowed to purchase on credit without them, their purchases being entered in a credit book and the amount thereof deducted from the wages which are due upon payday. There is one evil of great importance that attaches to both of these systems, and that is that the prices of food in many, if not in a majority, of such stores are higher than they are in the other stores in the same community. There is really no reason for this as the storekeepers very seldom lose anything on such accounts. There is another evil connected with the credit-book system, and that is that the store-

keeper does not keep the quantity and the items purchased from day to day, but simply enters the word "efectos" (things) with the value of the same, and the vast majority of the laborers being illiterate, there is no doubt that the customary disputes between the laborers and the storekeepers when they come to settle up are frequently, if not usually, justified, so far as the laborers are concerned.

A great difficulty is, however, that practically all of these laborers live one week behind hand. On Monday morning they have nothing to make their purchases with for the coming week; they must get food somewhere and they themselves beseech their employers to provide them with means of purchasing on credit. I believe that the Government can accomplish considerable in preventing exploitations under the present law, but new legislation is absolutely essential to a material betterment of conditions. It is doubtful, however, whether perfect conditions in this problem can ever be attained through legislation or ~~in~~ through strikes.

The third point in dispute, that of the ajuste system, is a just cause of complaint in some sections of the island, while in other sections it seems to be working equitably and advantageously. Ajuste contracts vary greatly in different sections of the island. In some places the ajuste contractor controls hundreds of men and is comparable to an administrator or superintendent in the importance of his work. Such ajuste contractors agree to cut hundreds of acres of sugar cane, for example, at a stated price per acre. In other cases the ajuste contractor has only a few men under him and the importance of his position is comparable to that of a sub-boss. Such contractors agree to cut a certain number of rows of cane, for example, for a certain price. In both of these cases the ajuste contractor has control of the employees either directly or through his subcontractors. The smaller ajuste contractors work themselves with their

laborers and sometimes the price received is divided proportionately among the gang, the contractor receiving a few cents more. In still other sections of the island the employer makes his ajuste contracts with the individual laborers directly. This is the simplest case and varies but little from ordinary piece work. It is certainly the most satisfactory method.

The difficulty with the system of ajuste contract is that one or more middlemen are introduced, each one of whom is in a way an independent merchant profiting according to the cheapness with which he can employ his needed laborers. The remedy is for the employer to have a salaried employee who will make contracts directly with the individual workmen. This is more cumbersome, according to some employers and, of course, it increases the burden of administration upon the employer and his staff.

The fourth problem in dispute, that of the agregados or laborers living in houses belonging to the employer, also varies greatly in the different sections of the Island. In some places as, for example, Bayamón and about Aguadilla, there are employers who allow their laborers the free use of a house and also of a small piece of land on which vegetables are cultivated and, in some cases, pigs and chickens and even a cow and a calf are kept by the laborer upon his employer's land. The general rule seems to be that where the employer provides nothing except the land, then the laborer shall take all or practically all of what is produced; but where the employer provides the seeds and the implements for cultivation, etc., then the laborer gives the employer one-half of what is produced. In some other sections of the Island, especially along the south coast, such laborers are given the use of a home and nothing more. In many trips about the Island the undersigned has found not more than three or four cases in which laborers living in plantation houses received less wages than laborers living outside of the plantations. They are generally ~~gone~~ paid the same rate of wages. The advantage to

the employer is that he has a resident supply of more or less skilled labor upon which he can depend. The one condition upon which laborers occupy such houses is that they must work for the employer when he requests their services. During the last strike many laborers were thrown out of such houses in violation of law. Generally in the sugar cane sections the houses occupied by such laborers have been erected by the employer and are built of boards and zinc, but in many places they are mere thatched huts erected by the laborers from palm leaves, etc., obtained from the employer's land.

The fifth problem in dispute, that of the hours of work per day, is practically the same in all parts of the island. Laborers usually say that they work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with from one-half ~~to one~~ hour to one hour off for the noon day meal. Employers say that their laborers do not work steadily all of this time. It is probable that the average working day is of approximately ten hours. The agreements made during the last strike fixed the maximum day at nine hours.

J C Bill Jr

PRELIMINARY TABLE OF WAGES.

District	No. of workmen whose wages be- fore the strike were obtained	Average dai- ly wage be- fore the strike	No. of workmen whose wages af- ter the strike were obtained	Average dai- ly wages af- ter the strike
Patillas....	250	\$0.57	250	\$0.67
Maunabo.....	301	0.545	301	0.65
Caguas.....	136	0.535	131	0.61
Juncos.....	190	0.51	259	0.61
Yabucoa.....	176	0.51	156	0.59
Humacao.....	239	0.52	243	0.715
Guayama.....	190	0.61	190	0.735
Cayey.....	162	0.665	(a)	(a)
Bayamón....	156	0.48	449	0.595
Utuaado.....	40	0.41	(a)	(a)
Arecibo.....	193	0.56	202	0.615
Vega Alta...				
Ceiba.....	33	0.526	26	0.67
Naguabo.....	125	0.48	134	0.5925
Cabo Rojo...	161	0.4375	161	0.525
Añasco.....	198	0.57	280	0.717

(a) No strike or strike broken and no increases in wages.

GOVERNMENT OF PORTO RICO
INSULAR POLICE
HEADQUARTERS

ADDRESS ALL OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS
TO THE
CHIEF OF INSULAR POLICE
SAN JUAN, P. R.

San Juan, P. R.,
March 25, 1915.

THE SCHOOL STRIKE

On the night of February the 24th, 1915, a large number of students of the Central High School of Santurce appeared before the House of Delegates and one of their number, Eugenio Font, read a document signed by himself and 150 students more wherein they requested that the Language Bill introduced by Mr. de Diego in the House of Delegates be enacted into a law, for various reasons stated in their petition, the most powerful of which is that by teaching all the subjects in a language with which the students are not familiar, they are unable to properly understand them, and eventually leave the school without mastering either language.

Brilliant speeches were made by members of the House, especially by Speaker de Diego, who was applauded and presented with a bouquet of flowers. The building occupied by the House of Delegates, and street below, were so congested with people that a motion was passed to the effect that the House hold meetings at the Municipal Theater for the discussion of the language bill, the discussion being restricted to two speeches: one from Mr. Rossy, opposing the de Diego Bill and defending that of Delegate Huyke, and one from Mr. de Diego in support of his own bill.

In view of the motion above referred to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, under date of Feb. 25, 1915, appointed District Chief Cabrera, of San Juan, as assistant Sergeant-at-arms of the lower house while the same was in session at the Municipal Theater - February 25 and 26th - and ordered him, and the force at his command to maintain order thereat.

At the meeting held on the night of the 25th, Mr. Rossy spoke first. In the course of his speech he remarked that the caliber of the Americans sent down to govern this Island was growing from bad to worse. He defended the teaching of both languages from the early years of a child's study and ended his speech saying that when he should die it was his desire that his corpse be wrapped in both the American and Spanish Flags.

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Mr. de Diego opened his speech saying that he cared not to be wrapped in either the American or Spanish Flag: that his wish was that he be wrapped up in the Porto Rican Flag. A strong anti-american sentiment was felt throughout Mr. de Diego's entire speech and he expressed a desire for the independence of Porto Rico, now linked to a nation whose customs, language and traditions were not in harmony with those of Porto Rico.

Public sentiment was greatly aroused over this question of the language bill, and on February 25th, Francisco Grovas, in attendance at the Santurce High School, while soliciting the signatures of students of the San Juan School No. 1, of San Juan, to a document protesting against the teaching of English, acted in a disrespectful manner towards the principal of that school, Miss Beatriz Lasalle. Grovas was temporarily suspended therefor by Mr. Morin, the School Inspector, until he apologized to the principal. Miss Lasalle is a Republican teacher and her motives for Grovas' suspension were immediately misconsidered as being actuated by politics. The editor of the Heraldo Español and such Unionist Leaders as Speaker de Diego, Coll and others were seen advising school children to refrain from attending school unless the suspension of Grovas was revoked.

Vicente Balbás Capó, and Dr. Quedo Baez, the Physician for the Police Department, held meetings in front of the High School and talked to the children for hours at a time explaining to them that their "patriotism", "fellowship", and the like, should prevent them from attending school until Grovas was permitted to return to school without apologizing to the principal for whom he had shown so little respect.

The strikers gathered themselves in front of their respective schools and posted hand bills and signs in the vicinity thereof, some of which read as follows: "Whoever has no shame may enter", "A la Huelga", etc. Francisco Ramos, a student who in violation of the law, posted a sign on the public square of San Francisco was arrested by the police on March 2nd, and sentenced in court to a fine of \$15.00 or 30 days in jail, from which sentence he appealed and was acquitted by the District Court. District Chief Paoli who was summoned by a teacher of the Central Grammar School to prevent strikers from forcibly intimidating and abusing other students, was summoned before a Committee of the House of Delegates to explain certain rude and abusive conduct against strikers of which he was unjustly accused.

The students of the High and Central Grammar Schools struck and the principals of these schools notified their parents that unless they returned thereto within five days and explained their

conduct, their separation from the school would be recommended.

On March 3rd the parents receiving such notices met in the hall occupied by the Cine Versailles, of Senturce, to discuss the situation and pass a series of resolutions expressive of their attitude in the matter.

A Committee, denominated as the "Comité Paternal" was created, consisting of the following gentlemen:

Ramón H. Delgado,
Rafael López Landrón,
Manuel Quevedo Baez,
Francisco Socorro, and
Vicente Balbás Capó.

After discussing matters, it was resolved on March 4, 1915,
(1) That it had not been proven that Grovas had in any way acted disrespectful to Miss Lasalle, by soliciting the signatures of students. (2) That he had not committed any offense in school against any teacher. (3) That the only thing he is charged with was committed in the street, beyond jurisdiction of the teacher. (4) That the police and not the teachers have jurisdiction in the street. (5) That public interest is paramount to the dignity of a school teacher, when the latter has not proven the accusation. (6) That the continuation of such a state of affairs causes the publication of false information which is detrimental to the country. (7) That a peaceful and honorable solution should be reached. (8) That the conduct of the children in opposing unjust treatment to one of their fellow students cannot be reproached. (9) That the students on strike have done nothing which could be considered as riotous or improper. (10) That the period of five days given to the parents to send their children to school and explain their conduct is degrading and offensive to the decorum of such parents.

In view of the above reasons it was further resolved:

(1) To state publicly the parents' regret of this incident, but without condemning the children whose fellowship and attitude are justified (2) to answer the communications addressed to parents by the Principal of the High School (3) appoint an executive committee to take the matter up with various authorities for its proper adjustment and with the courts, if necessary (4) inform the Governor, the Commissioner of Education and the Committee of the House of Delegates regarding these resolutions (5) propose an honorable solution of this conflict, such as, for instance, the allowing of students to return to school without further examining the causes which brought about the trouble nor the effects derived therefrom admitting Grovas with the rest (6) to ask the

parents of the children on strike not to force them to break the same until the matter has been decided.

On Friday, March the 5th, at about 10 a.m., the Paternal Committee visited the Governor and officially informed him that the students of the Central High School had gone on a strike because their schoolmate, Francisco Grovas, had been suspended by the school authorities without being given an opportunity to appear and defend himself. The Committee, considering that the protest was justified, reported the same to the Governor. After an extensive discussion the Governor stated that before taking any action in this matter, he would impose, as an indispensable condition, that the students return to their classes on Monday the 8th, with the exception of Grovas. With regard to the latter the Governor promised to make a special investigation of the case by a Committee which he would appoint for that purpose.

On the 6th instant, the Paternal Committee addressed a communication to the Governor informing him that notwithstanding the agreement arrived at, Grovas' father had received a letter from Mr. Theo. L. Morin, Supervising Principal, advising him that his son had been expelled from school for the remainder of the present school year, in view of the fact that he had not presented himself within the period of five days given him to explain why his son should not be suspended.

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Vicente Balbás notified the Governor's private Secretary that he was in possession of a letter from the Department of Education to Grovas, expelling him definitely, and that in view of such communication, which he regarded as contrary to the agreement with the Governor, he held the agreement in question as no longer binding. The Governor's Secretary replied, with all sincerity, that the communication was merely a matter of routine, that it would also be included in the investigation the Governor would order of Grovas' case, and that therefore Mr. Balbás ought not to consider it as a breach of the promise the Governor had made to the Committee and had just reaffirmed upon learning of Mr. Balbás' message.

At this juncture, Mr. Balbás at a general assembly of parents, expressed himself in very strong terms against the Governor. In the course of his speech he remarked that "whatever resolution be adopted, the same should be firm and unanimous". He further remarked that "as letters crossing between gentlemen should be answered immediately and the Governor had not as yet answered the one which was addressed to him, notwithstanding its urgency, it should be resolved that the students refrain from attending school, until a reply had been received". Mr. Quevedo Baez, said that he

was of the opinion that in view of the ridiculous position in which the Committee had been placed by the Governor failing to comply with his part of the agreement, and the attitude of the department, the Committee should be dissolved and another appointed. Mr. Balbás second the motion. Mr. Coll y Cuchí stated that "If the Governor made a promise of honor, as are the promises made between gentlemen, and the Commissioner of Education has been so powerful as to make the Governor break his word - if that has occurred - it is necessary to say to the country how it is that we are being governed and how the highest authority of the Administration of Porto Rico acts. It is necessary that we know whose word goes in the Executive Mansion: that of the Governor of Porto Rico or that of the Commissioner of Education and his subordinates. Away with these ambiguous situations! Let the strike continue in defence of Grovas, who - as could happen - might cause the erection of a bronze statue in Porto Rico as a symbol of the greatest act of protest from this people".

The "Heraldo Español" has, since the above incident, published lengthy articles protesting of the Governor's action and in many of these articles he is charged with having broken his word of honor, of showing weakness, and of being responsible for the present state of affairs.

On March the 10th, the Paternal Committee wrote to the Governor urging him to proceed with the investigation of the Grovas' affair and on the day following the President of that Committee was informed by a letter from Mr. Muñoz, the Governor's private Secretary, that the former decided to ratify his letter of the 9th instant and considered this matter closed.

On Sunday the 14th instant, the Paternal Committee held a mass meeting to discuss matters fully. It was agreed to rent a house in the vicinity of the Central High School of Santurce, to be placed under the direction of Mr. Moczó, who now runs a private school. The funds for defraying the necessary expenses of this school to be obtained by public subscription. Several teachers have offered to give their services free to this school.

On the 17th instant the school above referred to was inaugurated under the name of High School "José de Diego" and on the following day, it is claimed, was attended by over 100 students. Mr. Balbás introduced Mr. de Diego who offered to teach General History from 8 to 9 a.m. Mr. de Diego delivered a speech to the persons present.

At the entrance of this school there is a sign with the following inscription: "This is the school of the Porto Ricans' honor".

This school according to statements made by Mr. Balbás and other gentlemen at the recent meetings held by the Paternal Committee "represents the dignity of the Porto Rican, and its establishment opens an epoch in the history of this Island which cannot be forgotten". "But - quoting Mr. Balbás - the problem we now have to solve, which we are solving, is that these children who have given such a magnanimous example of their patriotism, honor and dignity lose not their school year. We all should and will contribute, to the extent of our ability, to maintain this school where the poor and rich alike may receive instruction. There will be no partiality shown here. Each student will have a place. The parents of students who can afford it, may contribute with a monthly quota, whatever they can give, in order to maintain same until other sources of income are devised, and the poor will be entitled to the same privileges. That was our principal object from the start, and not as has been falsely stated, that those who encouraged the strike being men of means could pay for the instruction given to our children, without caring for the welfare of the poor students.

"This school is for all those who have left the High School, and for those who now or later may wish to enroll therein, whether or not they favored the fellowship strike. Our arms are open to all those who desire to enroll.

"By means of monthly fees, of contributions obtained by strolling bands of students, evening entertainments, shows, etc., we will secure funds with which to carry on the work".

Mr. Teodoro Aguilar is appointed Technical Manager of the school. He offers to teach Latin also. Mr. Balbás promising to teach French. Lawyer López Landrón will teach Civil Government.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to Mr. Balbás, is written across the bottom of the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent horizontal stroke across the middle.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

Executive Council.

President, SAMUEL GOMPERS.
Secretary, FRANK MORRISON.
Treasurer, JOHN B. LENNON,
Bloomington, Ill.

First Vice-President, JAMES DUNCAN,
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Second Vice-President, JAMES O'CONNELL,
512 Ouray Bldg., Washington, D. C.
Third Vice-President, D. A. HAYES,
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Carpenters' Building, Indianapolis, Ind.
Eighth Vice-President, WILLIAM GREEN,
1102-8 Merchants Bank Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

801-809 G STREET N. W.

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE, MAIN 3871-2-3
CABLE ADDRESS, 'AFEL'



LF

Washington, D. C., March 16, 1916

MAR 20 1916 ACK'D

Sir:

From time to time your attention has been called to correspondence from Porto Rico and other information regarding the conditions prevailing among the workers of that Island. In connection therewith, your attention is further called to the following cablegrams which I have recently received from Mr. Santiago Iglesias, President of the Porto Rico Federation of Labor and the official representative of the American Federation of Labor in the Island.

"San Juan, P.R.

Federationist

(try Ouray Bldg.) Washington

Sugar corporations practically commanding. Police savagely killed wounded clubbed ten agricultural strikers Arecibo. Women parade was outrageously shot under fabricated charges. Labor Leaders arrested. Poor laborers terrorized. Earnestly request congressional investigation and give publicity atrocities.

(Signed) Iglesias.

March 10."

"Arecibo, P.R.

Federations.

(try Ouray Bldg.) Washington

After conference with sugar corporations representatives, Governor Yager dictated oppressive order absolutely prohibiting peaceful labor assemblies parades and groups of three persons in strike district and Arecibo city. Also held Iglesias as responsible for any public protest, or disturbance. Governor wants entire submission of strikers to employer. Earnestly appeal authorities Washington to abolish tyrannical orders of Governor and in name credit nation constitutional rights be guaranteed to labor.

(Signed) Iglesias

March 13."

On March 14 I received the following cablegram from another

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Hon. Woodrow Wilson--2

organizer of the American Federation of Labor in Porto Rico, Mr.

P. R. Martinez:

"San Juan, P.R.

Federationist

Washington

After assassinations strikers martial law declared by Governor and Secretary Travieso Constitutional rights abolished Iglesias badly illegally threatened by Governor and officials energetically protest against outrages and treachery. America institutions immediate action needed.

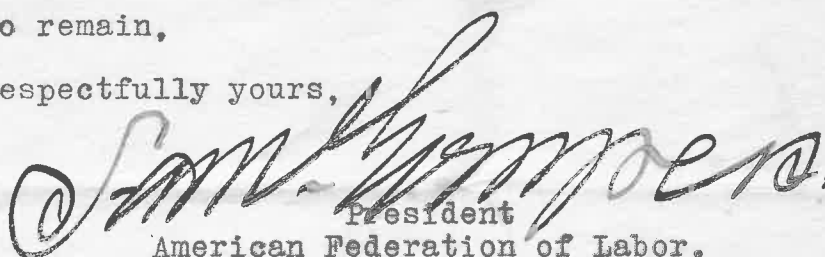
(Signed) Martinez
March 13."

I am informed that Chairman Jones of the House Committee on Insular Affairs has declared that the Committee has decided to close its hearings and that they are not likely to be re-opened.

The officers of the American Federation of Labor are now endeavoring to secure a hearing before the Senate Committee. In the meantime it seemed to me that the above cablegrams should be submitted to you and to the Secretary of Labor; hence this communication. May I hope for your sympathetic and favorable action?

I have the honor to remain,

Very respectfully yours,


President
American Federation of Labor.

Hon. Woodrow Wilson,

President of the United States,

Washington, D.C.



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

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801-809 G STREET N. W.

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE, MAIN 3871-2-3
CABLE ADDRESS, 'AFEL.'



Washington, D. C., Feb. 7, 1916.

Mr. F. C. Roberts,

Bureau of Labor,

San Juan, Porto Rico.

Dear Sir and Brother:

Your personal favor received and contents noted. I have just received a cablegram from Iglesias, copy of which I attach. I would be pleased to have such information as you can give to me in regard to conditions in San Juan as you see them.

Yours fraternally,

Secretary.
American Federation of Labor.

The Filson Historical Society

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San Juan, P. R., Feb. 23, 1916.

Mr. Frank Morrison,
Secretary A. F. of L.,
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Mr. Morrison:-

In reply to yours under date of Feb. 7th permit me to say that the office of the Attorney General is making a thoro investigation into the trouble between the police and strikers in the towns of Bayamon, Loiza, and Juana Diaz. The Attorney General has spared no efforts to get at all the facts bearing on these cases, and I inclose you herewith copy of letter he sent me in reply to letter asking for information from his office as to what steps were being taken to see that justice was done to all parties concerned.

Approximately 50,000 agricultural workers have taken part in strikes since January 1st, and naturally there has been several minor clashes between the police and strikers. But this year has been a very quiet strike compared to the last one. Bearing on this point, I quote you a paragraph from the report of the Chief of Police to the Governor under date of Feb. 22d.

" I wish to state that the present strike, as compared with that of 1915, is by far exceedingly peaceful, and with the exception of the two incidents (Loiza and Juana Diaz) the laborers were orderly and law-abiding, for which reason the police has had to use very little force to maintain law and order."

In another letter the Chief of Police told the Governor that:

" he attributed the quiet manner in which the workers had conducted their strike to the good advice giving to them by the Chief of the Bureau of Labor".

As already stated every case is being investigated, but the action of the police in Juana Diaz was of such a nature that after a preliminary investigation the Governor suspended the Chief of Police in that town and transferred the Corporal. The Governor assured me that just as soon as the Attorney General's papers are submitted to him he will re-

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move every man that has been found guilty of partiality against the strikers.

The police department is made up of Porto Ricans, who only receive a pittance of \$38 a month. You must know just what kind of material the force is composed of at that price. Then again, the police magistrates are practically in the hands of the local politicians and a great deal of the abuses toward the workers can be attributed to them.

In my report to the Legislature I have tried to speak freely and frankly on all questions that affect the workers, and just as soon as the report is printed I will send you a copy.

With the exception of one town (Arecibo) the Island is, as far as labor disputes are concerned, practically quiet.

The workers have gained more this year than ever before. In many towns 8 and 9 hours constitute a day's work with an increase in pay. Of course the pay ought to be more, but that will come in time.

Industrially, conditions are very bad here, and will be as long as there are three men for every job.

With the best of wishes, etc.,

(Sgd) F. C. Roberts.

March 29, 1916.

My dear Mr. President;

Your very kind note of the 20th instant, enclosing the letter of Mr. Gompers of March 16 embodying cablegrams with reference to the strike difficulties in Porto Rico, has been received.

In the first place I desire to make an emphatic denial of all the charges against the police and the government of Porto Rico contained in the cablegrams.

There are at present no strikes or labor difficulties in the island except at Arecibo and the adjoining district of Barceloneta. The local conditions in these two localities, especially in Arecibo, are so peculiar that it is difficult to explain briefly just what has taken place and what has been done to preserve order and prevent the destruction of life and property. However, it is perhaps safe to say that the whole situation there was so thoroughly complicated and local politics and personal ambitions and rivalries so strong that the industrial question which is apparently made the center of it is relatively of slight importance. The so-called labor leaders and agitators of the strike in Arecibo are in

reality political leaders of a recently organized socialist party and are playing a game for political control of the municipality. For several weeks they have been agitating the entire community in an endeavor to call out the workers in the cane fields and the mills and produce a state of strike which would close the sugar factories. In this effort they have thus far failed, for the mills are all running and their owners insist that they have an abundance of labor. But in the effort to foment a strike the agitators have used peculiar Latin-American methods which have resulted in continued public disorder and disturbances of the peace, and culminated on March 9th in a serious clash between the so-called strikers on the one hand and the police and the laborers who desired to work on the other. In this clash one laborer was killed and one policeman was shot in the head and critically wounded, and another policeman and several laborers were injured more or less seriously. This deplorable incident made it necessary for me to take somewhat stricter methods to preserve order. In addition to this there had occurred many incendiary fires in the cane fields and some measures had to be taken to protect this sort of property. This is always difficult because the cane is scattered throughout the country and it is well-nigh impossible to pre-

vent incendiary fires or to discover the perpetrators when they are started. However, the measures taken to restore order and protect property were all of them thoroughly legal and in my judgment entirely proper under the circumstances. There was no declaration of martial law, no deprivation of constitutional rights, no prohibition of public meetings or the peculiar Latin-American parades along the roads throughout the country except for a day or two following the riot, which was necessary for the moment in order to prevent other and probably more serious clashes which seemed imminent. In short, there has been on the part of the police far less interference with the demonstrations and disturbances of the so-called strikers at Arecibo than the conditions there seemed to warrant, because I was exceedingly anxious to give to the laborers of that district every possible opportunity to improve their conditions if it was possible for them to do so by any legal or peaceful method.

As you doubtless know, and as we all know, the conditions of the laboring masses in Porto Rico have always been and are now very far from what we could wish them to be. But in my opinion the greatest misfortune under which they suffer at the present moment is the character of their leaders. Their chief leader is Santiago Iglesias - the man who signed two

of the cablegrams transcribed in Mr. Gompers' letter to you,- a Spaniard by birth and education who is now an American citizen but whose methods, character and ideals are thoroughly Spanish. He is unscrupulous, utterly regardless of the truth and fair play, ambitious for power and his record is so bad that nobody in Porto Rico seems to have any confidence in him except the poor ignorant dupes among the laborers whom he has gotten together into the so-called Free Federation of Labor. Unfortunately this man seems to have the entire confidence of Mr. Gompers and maintains his position and influence here largely through his supposed influence with Mr. Gompers and the American Federation of Labor. I am doing my best for the real improvement of the labor situation in the island. Progress must of course necessarily be slow because of the ignorance and peculiar character of the laborers themselves and because of the traditions and social organization which are the result of two or three hundred years of history. But the greatest handicap of progress is the quality of the leadership which has seized control of the relatively small number of laborers who are organized.

I hope you will pardon me for trespassing further upon your time so as to thank you for your interest in the Porto Rican bill, which I am informed

has been included in the list of the bills to be pressed at this session. I learn, however, that there is a determination on the part of the prohibition leaders to attach to this measure a rider in the form of a prohibition amendment for the Island of Porto Rico. This is a matter of the greatest importance to the American administration in the island at this time, not only because of its effects upon the present revenue system but because of the political effect which would certainly follow its enactment.

I am enclosing herein copy of a letter which I have sent to Chairman Jones and Mr. Shafroth, setting forth the facts involved in this matter, in the hope that you might find time to read it and see your way to take some helpful action toward preventing the application of a prohibition law to Porto Rico or at least postponing it until the island may have become better prepared for it.

I congratulate you most heartily upon the general development of the political situation which has recently taken place both in and out of Congress.

Assuring you of my warmest good wishes both personally and politically, I am

Sincerely your friend,

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