

PORTO RICAN DELEGATION

TO THE
UNITED STATES.

TO THE HONORABLE THE PRESIDENT, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

S i r s :

The legislators of Porto Rico have unanimously approved a Resolution, the full text of which is hereto appended as part of this memorial.

By the said Resolution our people through us, their representatives, propose some fundamental changes in the Organic Act which now serves as the constitution of Porto Rico, and ask also from the authorities of the Republic an authoritative declaration with regard to what is to be the definite status of Porto Rico when it shall be no longer a mere possession of the United States, and when it shall start upon the full enjoyment of a life inconsonance with the highest ideals of democracy and justice; a consummation that is expected by both the American and the Porto Rican peoples.

It is not unreasonable that Porto Ricans as a people should be interested in knowing what their future is to be. A feeling of restlessness as to the future is natural, and to be expected of all intelligent and reasonable peoples. They are not satisfied with mere hopes nor expectations. They wish to know,

they desire to be certain, and this is especially true when the future of a whole people depends, as ours does, not on what they may do, but on the will and policies of others. It is our great fortune, however, that in our case we are dealing with the people of the United States of America, a people that does not deem itself infallible, and that, because of its fraternal and democratic convictions is ever open to conviction.

Twenty-five years ago the diplomats representing the Spanish Kingdom at the peace negotiations leading to the Treaty of Paris inquired of the American Representatives what the political status of the Porto Rican people would be. The American diplomats rightly replied that the future of our people could be trusted to the hands of a nation whose Congress never enacted a single law that was detrimental to human liberty or to human dignity.

And now the signers of this document, representing the people of Porto Rico, the people whose future lies in your hands, the people who can legitimately call their island their own -- for in it our ancestors have lived and died for many generations; in it our children were born; in it our families have succeeded each other uninterruptedly for centuries, -- ask consideration of and action on their claims.

Ours is a well-ordered, peaceful and Christian community, with free institutions guarding human rights and meeting and endeavoring to solve the same problems that are yours. It is

our belief and claim that our progress during the years in which we have been establishing a free and progressive Commonwealth justifies us in asking for such consideration in the granting of complete self-government as we believe we merit and deserve. It is our belief that we are justified in claiming that the time has come when we, American citizens that we are, may with entire safety assume full responsibility in the management of our own affairs. The work we have accomplished and with which you are familiar should be to you a guarantee that the work we will accomplish in the future for the welfare of our people, such as sanitation, road-building, the elevation of labor, the lessening of the burdens of poverty, the wiping out of illiteracy, shall be such as to bring continued credit to ourselves and honor to the other Commonwealths of the Union.

For the favorable consideration of our claims we count upon the noble spirit of justice which animates you, to whom such appeals never have been made in vain.

We are bound to you by strong and indestructible ties, chief among which is the tie of gratitude. And convinced, as we are, that the life of your Republic is our life, our destinies being so intimately bound together, we solemnly declare before the World that when, if ever, the security of your institution of freedom, justice and democracy and the honor of the United States may be threatened, the one million and a quarter of Porto Ricans whom we represent, will be ready to pledge their lives, their

fortunes and their sacred honor, as they did in the past, for the protection and defense of the Republic.

With full faith in the justice of our cause, we make this appeal and trust our future to your hands.

Signed this, the thirteenth, day of January, in the year nineteen hundred and twenty-four.

(Sgd.) Miguel Guerra,
Speaker, House of Representatives.

(Sgd.) Antonio R. Barcelo,
President, Senate of Porto Rico.

(Sgd.) Alf. Lastra Charriez,
" Enrique Bird, Jr.,
" Enrique Gonzalez Mensa,
" Rafael Alonso,
Members of the House.

(Sgd.) Rafael Cuevas Zequeira,
" O. Jordan, M. D.,
" Jose Tous Soto,
" Santiago Iglesias,
Senators.