

Discussed by Gen. Allen a la  
1<sup>st</sup> Legislature and Section

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PORTO RICO.

1900

For the first time in the annals of this Island, you, the representatives of the people, gather as a legislative body, under American sovereignty.

Today, in the name of the People of Porto Rico, you undertake legislation, by means of which it is hoped the Island will rise to a position of influence and prosperity worthy your highest hopes.

At the threshold of this great opportunity, I urge you to approach the task with patriotic devotion to your country; with unselfish regard for the best results; with conscientious heed to the rights of all; so that your statute book may be strong and respected, and stand for the comfort, happiness and well-being of every inhabitant.

In the general election just passed, you closed the door upon old methods and customs. You have indicated to the world your ability to conduct yourselves with order and merit. Henceforth, you must move forward with the light of modern experience to guide your way. But the direction is clear.

Remember, always, your work is of the utmost moment; no carelessly considered law should, under any circumstances, find its way upon your statute book.

You may never know the anxiety with which your experiment is being watched. Let its results be such that your country, and law-abiding people everywhere, will approve.

You are today the masters of your own future. December 15th, the Military Department of Porto Rico will disappear. All

United States soldiers, except the small force needed to care for the permanent fortifications, will have left the Island, and for the first time in over 400 years, the people of Porto Rico, will be relieved from military rule.

In the work you are about to undertake, you will need to exercise all the virtues of patriotism, loyalty and patience, for the eyes of the world are upon you. Every step will be criticised, and you must be prepared to defend your position upon every public question. If you follow the guidance of the best experience, if you are wise and conservative, all will come out well and the future will pay the just tribute to your faithfulness which a hasty critic may fail to give. You are engaged in work of the utmost import for your country, and I believe you will succeed.