

March 9th, 1923.

Hon. Jose Tous Soto,
Ponce, P. R.

My dear Friend:-

Since writing you last week very little has happened. I had Coats and his wife with me up to last Monday, as Towner requested Coats to remain over to see about his appointment. Towner saw the President on Monday and it was agreed that Mestre should be asked to resign and then Coats would be appointed, and as the President was leaving that same day for Florida to be away until some time in April, Towner told us that he suggested that the appointment be made right away, so that Coats could accompany him to the Island on the 31st instant. The President agreed to sign the commission. I was gratified to see how well Towner took up with Coats, and, of course, the Governor being a lawyer, the Attorney General's task will be easier.

There is only one little unpleasantness which I did not like. Towner requested me that in order to avoid ill feelings and misunderstandings, that in giving out the news, both here and in the Island, of Coats' appointment, I should refrain from mentioning the fact that he was appointed through my endeavors, but that instead I should say that his appointment came about through the backing of the New York Delegation. This will explain my cable to you sent from New York on Wednesday of this week. I have an idea that this was the working of McIntyre's mind, as he called up the office of the National Committee, asking Coats to come to his office Monday morning, as he had to talk over certain matters with him. When Coats asked if I should accompany him he said no, it would be better if he came alone. Coats told me afterwards that McIntyre told him that he had written to Mestre, asking that he send in his resignation, and that he had suggested to Coats to call on Cordova Davila, but that he should go alone. Coats told me that he made it plain to McIntyre that in his doings as Attorney General he would be guided in the first place by the Governor, and in the second place by his friend Todd, in whom he had entire confidence. To this I replied to Coats, both in the name of the party and in my own personally, that we would never embarrass him at all, and in the matter of appointments we would only require from him our just dues, but that we would request that whenever he had to make a recommendation for appointment, even if the office belonged to the other party, that we should be advised before hand so as to be able to let him know our opinion in the premises. I also told him that he would have to get rid of his two assistants and appoint new men, both of them, of course, Republicans.

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Just to see what Towner would say, I asked him if he thought it was proper for me to take Coats over to Davila's office and introduce him as the next Attorney General, and Towner said he thought it was very proper. McIntyre had said to Coats that the reason he suggested that he go alone to see Davila, was because when Reily had been appointed I had introduced him to Davila, and that fact has created ill feeling in the Island. Unfortunately, when Coats and I called at Davila's office he was absent, but we saw his secretary and left a message for him. That same afternoon we called again and found the door closed, and Coats left a card under the door expressing his regrets at not finding Davila. We left that same evening for New York and, as I found out after my return, I am glad that I was away because Davila gave a dinner to Towner, inviting several people, and he left word at my hotel inviting me for the dinner. If I had been here I could not have helped attending, and you know how embarrassing this would have been for me, as certain things cannot be explained to our people in the Island. I expressed my regrets to Towner afterwards and thanked Davila for his courtesy.

Towner and his wife and Coats are planning to leave Saturday the 31st. The former expecting that Reily will be back before that date.

I am seeing Towner every day at his own request. He showed me all the cablegrams which he received congratulating him on his appointment. Reily, Barcelo, Guerra, Giorgety, Santoni, Hernandez, Usera, of Madrid, yourself and Feliu. To all he has replied.

In talking about the resignations of heads of departments, Towner insists that it is not his intention to make any immediate change, but that he hopes to get acquainted with the personnel and then make those changes that should be best for his administration. He told me that some one had suggested to him the advisability of taking back Siaca as Executive Secretary and he wanted me to tell him all that I knew about this man and the present incumbent. I told him that Siaca was an old employee, competent, but unreliable and unfaithful whenever the interests of his party came into play, and I then explained to him the reason that Reily told me had caused his dismissal. I told him that Saldana had been in the Secretary's office ever since the first civil Governor was inaugurated, was a good and intelligent official and a man in whose loyalty he could depend.

The next thing Towner took up with me was of a confidential nature. He wants me to make a list of the members of the legislature and other prominent people with whom he will have to come in contact and make a brief sketch of each, tell-

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ing all I know about them, and how much he can rely upon them in his official dealings. He said I need not sign the papers, as he would consider it entirely confidential. He said he would give me also all the letters and cables which he may receive while I am here, so that I may tell him more or less how he is to answer them.

There is an advertising firm in Baltimore who, some time ago wrote Towner a proposition to undertake the advertising of the Island for tourists and investment purposes. This was when Towner's name was mentioned for Governor. The firm has now written Towner again and he has asked me to look up these people and find out about their financial standing and what are their means of conducting such a campaign, as he would like to take up this matter with the Legislature so as to have the advertising done officially.

Many people have been writing me letters, asking me to recommend them to Towner for positions, both for civil offices and two Porto Rican military men for the position as Military Aide. In every instance I have sent the letters to Towner, with one of mine saying what I know of the applicants. Towner, in every instance, has invariably replied that he is not thinking of making any appointments to office until he is down on the Island and has acquainted himself with conditions.

I forgot to mention the fact that last Sunday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Towner, Mr. and Mrs. Coats and myself, took a long drive through the city, thus enabling the Towners and the Coats to get in touch with each other, talk things over, etc., and it was all very pleasant.

Another thing that Towner took up with me this morning was the impending strike, of which there have been several reports. He asked me about Iglesias and his men. I told him that there was no reason whatever why he and Iglesias could not work together in the same pleasant way as Iglesias had worked with Reily. And from what the Judge told me, he is going well disposed to work hand in hand with Iglesias and his people. Of course, he said that he could not uphold lawlessness; that he was ready to support laborers in their right to strike and would not allow employers to use gunmen in the defense of strikebreakers. He told me that Gompers had requested an interview with him and he supposed that it was with the object of talking things over and that he intended to talk freely to Gompers, so that the latter might instruct Iglesias accordingly.

I went this morning to the Post Office Department and found out that the Attorney General had written to the Department, saying that they had appointed John Gay Assistant U. S. Attorney and that the latter's name should be dropped from further consideration as Postmaster of San Juan. The Department expects me to recommend a new name for this appointment and I requested that the matter be left in abeyance until I can get to the Island and talk to my friends. Please give attention to this subject,

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so that we may be able to pick a suitable man, capable of filling the job. The position pays \$3900 a year, but the raising of the salary will depend entirely on the Postmaster himself. The salary is rated on the amount of business done during the year. I want to say that Lee Nixon received on Tuesday a cablegram from B.A.Chaney, an old resident and Commission Merchant, asking him to recommend his name for appointment as Postmaster and requesting my endorsement. I told Nixon to answer that I could not do that, because I would expect my organization to guide me in such a recommendation, and I did not even know whether or not Mr. Chaney was a Republican.

The Post Office at Lares is giving me a good deal of trouble. You will remember that some time ago, in your presence, I had a heated conversation with Reily about young Paniagua, whom I had recommended for this position. Reily had recommended, at the request of Saldana, his brother-in-law Vilella, the present incumbent. At the same time Reily was recommending John Gay for Postmaster of San Juan and I was opposing that appointment. After a long discussion, you and I agreed that for certain reasons, which there is no need of mentioning in this letter, it was best to join Reily in Gay's recommendation, accepting his promise to join me in the recommendation of Paniagua. This was done and Reily himself wrote out a cable to the Department which he and I signed, recommending both Gay and Paniagua for the two offices. The two appointments were made by the President, and Paniagua was confirmed, notwithstanding a cablegram which was sent from Unionist leaders at Lares opposing his appointment. The matter was left in abeyance until I could reach Washington, and after I explained the whole matter to the Department, his bond was sent to him for the second time on January 18th. Some time after, I wrote Paniagua again requesting that he execute his bond and have it forwarded, as that was the only thing pending before he could take charge. For some reason or other the executed bond has never been received, and Paniagua has not answered my letters. Today I was shown a letter from Reily to the Department, dated February 28th, withdrawing his endorsement of Paniagua and stating that the latter was unworthy and should never have been appointed and reinstating his recommendation for the appointment of Vilella, who he claims is a good American and the better man of the two. Of course, I told the appointment clerk that I would be d----- if I should think of recommending this man, and requesting that the matter be left pending until he could hear from me when I get to the Island. I call this a "dirty" trick on the part of Reily, and I can see the hand of Saldana. Funny, when I had just recommended him highly to Towner as Executive Secretary.

Another appointment that failed of confirmation by the Senate, but for no other reason than the excess of work, was that of your brother Jaime as Postmaster at Hato Rey. His appointment will be made by the President very soon.

As I told you in my cable, I am leaving next week. If there should be any other news I will communicate it by cable.

Sincerely yours,