

February 9th, 1923.

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

My dear friend:-

Now that Reilly is back in Porto Rico, there is very little about which I can write, at least by this mail.

Friday of last week, before leaving for New York, I had a very brief talk with the Governor. I met him writing some letters and when he got through and came over where I was sitting, he asked me about my talk with Secretary Weeks. Of course, I could not tell him all that was said in that conversation, and simply told him that the Secretary said that if he should go back and make a success of it, he would uphold Reilly. Right here, the Governor interrupted me, asking whether or not under the law he could "fire" the Attorney General as a member of the Horse Racers Board. I told him that the three members being his appointees, not needing any confirmation, he could "fire" them at his pleasure. He then said that if he should have necessarily to appoint a Unionist in Mestre's place, and to this I said that Dr. Glines was appointed as a Unionist, as he had publicly aligned himself with that party. The Governor said the reason he asked that was because he wanted to appoint me in the place of Mestre. The reason I mention this fact is just to show you how this man's mind is still working, even today in the midst of so many difficulties and troubles, along the line of dismissals and appointments to office. He had no more interest in talking with me, and said that I should see him some time later, but as I was leaving on the train at noon, I was unable to see him again. He stopped at the same hotel in New York where I was staying, but when I called him up in the evening there was no answer given, and next morning when I met him before he left for the steamer, he said that he had refused to answer telephone calls, as he was avoiding newspaper men.

When Nixon and I saw him on board he was lying in his bed all covered up with a blanket, stating that he felt very bad. He said that he had been offered a position, paying \$12,000 a year, and that he had a contract for that job in his valise; that he did not see how, in his present

Hon. Jose Tous Soto

-2-

Feb. 9, 1923.

physical condition, he was going to be able to continue the fight in Porto Rico, and that if the Unionists should continue their foolishness, he would have to send in his resignation.

Geigel's cable received yesterday, gave us the news of the beautiful reception which was tendered to Reily, and I immediately telephoned it over to the White House, where it was taken down by a stenographer so that the President might read it. I went to see the Associated Press, and they had received the news, saying that Reily had arrived with his arm in a sling, and that he had said that it would take him a year to get better, and was leaving Huyke to act as Governor for awhile. I suppose that this last was done following a thought which he discussed with me while he was here, and of which I wrote you. As to Reily's disabled arm, unless he fell on board ship, and had to use a sling, I don't remember that he ever complained of having hurt either of his arms in the accident, and during his trip from Kansas City to Washington, and all the time he was here, he used both arms freely and never, never had either of them in a sling.

I went to see Judge Towner yesterday and showed him both cables, the one received from Geigel, and the one from the Associated Press, copy of which was given to me by their man. Towner was very much interested in the news and said that he hoped that the Legislature would not misbehave with Huyke, but that in any event, he considered that the days of Reily as Governor were numbered, and he gave us to understand that he was still in the lead as a candidate for the position.

I believe I told you in my last letter that I had written General Edwards regarding my conversation with the Secretary of War about his candidacy and I am now enclosing herewith Edwards' answer, in which he states that he is not a candidate. As to the question he asks about a Vice Governor, I am answering him that there is no such office provided for in our Organic Act.

Hon. Jose Tous Soto

-3-

Feb. 9, 1923.

After my return from New York on Tuesday, I saw Secretary Weeks again for a few minutes and he told me that he had arranged with the President for me to see him some time next week, and that I should get in touch with the President's Secretary, which I did, and on Monday next I will know what day of the week I shall be able to see the President, who is giving only two hours a day now to interviews with Senators and Congressmen, on account of his poor physical condition.

I had visiting me in New York for a couple of days Senator Coats of Saranac Lake, and he has decided to have his friends come out straight and work for him as a candidate for Governor, and I am expecting today the Secretary of the Republican Central Committee of New York and will go with him to see Senator Wadsworth and ascertain how far he will go on this subject. I have my doubts as to our ability in getting any promise from the President. There is no certainty as to when the Governorship will be vacant, and it will all depend upon developments when the Legislature meets. And you know very well that this is a strong card to be played by the Unionists, hoping that they will succeed. There must be something in the air, for the Postmaster General told me yesterday that he had met Cordova Davila at the Capitol two days ago and he jokingly asked him whether or not he had made up with the Governor. Davila's answer was, "you will see in a few days," repeating the sentence, and laughing.

There is not much more that I can write you regarding my business up here, except to say that Iglesias is returning on this same steamer, as he wants to be present during the first days of the meeting of the Senate, so as to take a hand in the discussion which will surely come up as to Reilly's appointments. Iglesias believes that I should stay here until something happens, but I don't see that I can well do so when matters are in such an indefinite state.

Conditions, politically speaking, are very disappointing. The President is not making any headway in his legislative program, and even the Republicans are divided

Hon. Jose Tous Soto

-4-

Feb. 9, 1923.

as to the best course to pursue. And the Progressives, aided by the Democrats, are planning to fight all his measures, knowing that the next Congress will not be so strongly Republican. Harding is going to have a very hard fight in his renomination and those politicians who are able to analyze the situation, compare the present state of affairs with that which prevailed in 1911 when Taft was President. There is no serious complaint against the Harding administration, except that he has been weak, and that many of his appointments have not panned out well for the party; and also that he has not taken a decided stand to further the interests of his party in the matter of patronage. On the other hand, the President is broken down, both physically and mentally. The strain of his office has been very great and he is very much worried over the physical condition of his wife, who is getting no better and who may never recover her health. The President's health has also been impaired, and it was noticed that when a couple of days ago he read his message to the joint session of Congress that his voice was very low and scarcely audible to many members in the Chamber.

Under these conditions, no one dares to predict what may happen within the next six months. Every President heretofore has been entitled to a renomination, with very few exceptions, but the rank and file of the Republican Party feel that unless things change for the better when Harding finishes a trip around the country, which he has under consideration, that they will have to face a decided opposition, some calling it indifference, as to the question of renominating Harding.

I hope I shall be able to give you better news in my next letter, and that I shall be able to give you the date of my return.

Believe me to remain,

Sincerely yours,

Hon. Jose Tous Soto

-5-

Feb. 9, 1923.

P.S. After a talk with Mr. Blair, Commissioner of Internal Revenue, I have the hope that we may still get Eloi Estrada appointed Director of Prohibition. I told Mr. Blair that when I left Porto Rico, I was given to understand by Judge Odlin that a new man had been appointed, and that he would go down some time in April. That Mr. Estrada's application had been sent to Governor Reilly, but that the latter told me that Commissioner Haynes had said that no Porto Rican would be appointed, and that a new man from up here would be going down shortly. For this reason, when the Governor asked me to endorse Mr. Rogers for the position, I had not objected to the proposition, because I thought at the time that it was better to get a man known to us than a new man coming from up here. At the time I accompanied the Governor to see Mr. Blair, Iglesias was with me, and Mr. Blair asked me if I did not believe a native should be appointed because some people were claiming that that should be done. Not wanting to embarrass the Governor, I told Mr. Blair that I would prefer not to answer the question, and the matter was not pressed. In my second talk with Mr. Blair, I explained to him my position and what had transpired in the whole matter. He said that it was true that the Commissioner (Haynes) believed that it was for the good of the service to send a new man from here who should be acquainted with the business, but that he (Blair) did not agree with Haynes, for he thought the office belonged to a man from the territory. That he did not believe that because there had been difficulties with Pesquera that that should bar all other Porto Ricans from the office, because in this country he was having many difficulties in that same direction. He asked me to see Mr. Haynes and talk with him about the matter, promising that he would also do so, and would investigate the fitness of Mr. Estrada for the position, promising that he would do the right thing in the matter. R.H.T.