

Washington, D.C.

April 27th, 1922.

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

My dear friend:-

I wrote you on the 25th from New York, but I am certain that this letter will arrive more or less at the same time, as the steamer sailing last Wednesday was a slow one.

Let me say at the start, that I have not seen the Secretary, but I will do so tomorrow morning at ten, as he was very busy today with the celebration of the anniversary of General Grant.

I had another talk today with Judge Towner and ^{he} was very interested. He spoke very highly of the letter which both you and I sent to the Governor and he thought that it was not only well put but timely. He recalled that in a conversation I had with him a few days after Reilly had been appointed I told him what I thought of the man, and he says that I had not been mistaken. He complained that when I was here last I did not come near him as frequently as I used to other times and, of course, I had to admit the reasons I had for not coming.

Towner wanted me to tell him whether or not Barcelo and his friends would ever go back to the old independence idea, that is to say, if they will have that plank placed in the platform again. I told him that I honestly believed that Barcelo and his friends were acting squarely just now, so as to keep their many promises here in Washington. I did not tell him of the pending split in the party in case Congress should fail to pass the Campbell bill.

Towner insists that I should tell the Secretary of War the seriousness of Reilly's position in Porto Rico with regard to the matters investigated by the Grand Jury and his responsibility and natural disgrace in case the matters should be pressed by the Prosecuting Attorney. Towner claims that the clearer the matters are placed before the Administration, the quicker they will act in order to bring about a satisfactory solution. It seems that Reilly's predicament has no escape; if he stays in Porto Rico, he runs a chance of prosecution, and if he comes here to fill any other appointment made by the President, the Senate will never

Apr. 27, 1922.

confirm him. At the same time, Towner says that as soon as a member of Congress should get up in the House and offer a resolution for impeachment, the same will go through instantly, because a petition for impeachment does not mean that the man is guilty but simply that an investigation should be had, and we all know that if this investigation is voted for, Reilly's gone. Consequently, that is his predicament.

Towner tells me that the President is sick of the whole situation, and as a consequence, of all the knocks against Reilly by Barcelo, Davila and others; he hates and "cusses" all Porto Ricans, and states that there are very few in whom he could place confidence.

I was very much amused today by the reading of a very long letter written by Reilly to Towner, and it was a confidential one, too. He goes on to explain the Toro situation, saying that for some time past Toro's behaviour and attitude have made him and Hartsell come to the conclusion that our friend is out of his mind. He explains the 500-acre campaign and how it had been objected to by different people, and that Toro had told him when he mentioned the fact to him that the objection came from Mr. Carpenter, threatening that he would kill him. He adds that Toro's mother was very anxious that her son should get out of that position and that he had spoken to Toro and suggested that he take a leave of absence of a few weeks and go over to Santo Domingo, but that Toro had presented his resignation, and although he was reluctant as to accepting it, he would have to do so as soon as he found a suitable man to succeed him. Although the Governor says that this is a confidential letter and Towner asked me to keep it in that same way, I am writing you so that you will see the Governor and have a suitable candidate presented to him to succeed Toro, as that position belongs to the Republican party.

The Governor goes on to explain his troubles and new friendship with Barcelo, and mentions the joint cablegram which they sent to the President. He also speaks of the two letters which Barcelo sent him to sign through Mestre, copies of which he sends to Towner. He also speaks of the Collazo matter, and in fact his letter is a hodge-podge of different subjects.

The most amusing part of it is where he says that ^{honest} Travieso, the Mayor of San Juan, whom he classes as the most ^{honest} Porto Rican in politics, and himself, had sent a joint cablegram to the President, stating that between the two of them they were able to iron out all the political differences in Porto Rico. He goes on to say that Travieso is to succeed Barcelo as the head of the Unionist party and he even claims that Barcelo, although reluctantly, is willing to step out and let Travieso take his place. Of course, you and I know very well that somebody is being deceived in this game and we also know that the deceived party is not Barcelo.

Apr. 27, 1922.

Now comes the most confidential part of his letter, and I hope that it will be kept strictly so by you. Judge Towner told me in New York that he was going to talk confidentially to me, begging that I should not repeat it to anybody, and for that reason, when I wrote you my New York letter I did not say anything about the subject, but since I got to Washington I have heard from several sources the same rumour, if not with all the details which Judge Towner told the subject to me. It seems that when President Harding was inaugurated, he offered the Governorship of the Philippine Islands to Towner and the matter was under advisement subject to an answer from Towner. In the meantime, the President considered that before appointing Towner he should have the subject of independence promised to the Filipinos thoroughly investigated before he would commit himself to follow the footsteps of the previous Administration, and he decided upon sending the Commission headed by General Wood to the Philippines and he so advised Towner. He then suggested to Towner that he would appoint him Vice Governor so that he would be in the Islands when General Wood should resign, and step into the position of Governor. To this Towner objected, and said that he would rather prefer to go down from the start as Governor, but that he would not take the second place, and it was so agreed. He now says that the President has spoken to him, requesting that he consider the advisability of succeeding Reily in Porto Rico, and tried to straighten out matters down there, and afterwards, when Wood should resign next year, he would be transferred to the Philippines. Towner is considering this matter and has not given any definite answer and he claims that when he heard that I was coming he decided he would consult with me to find out about the real conditions and how far he would have the support of the Republican party. Of course, you can imagine my surprise and what my answer was, and that was pledging to him our entire support.

In a talk which I had last evening with Nixon, I found out that Jones told our friend that it was only a matter of days when the Administration would take a final action in the Reily matter, and that Towner was being considered as a suitable candidate for the position. Colonel Townsend had a long talk with me today, and he also told me that he understands that among the different candidates mentioned for the place Townsend is one of those considered. Of course, the Colonel wanted me to tell him also if he should become a candidate if he count on our support. I could not help telling the Colonel that he also could count on our support, and there the matter rests at this writing.

This morning, when I called on Judge Towner, he had with him in consultation both Davilla and Collazo and he told me afterwards that they had been discussing the whole matter of the investigation made by the Grand Jury and he had requested Collazo to make a brief for him of the whole subject, showing how far the Governor has gone against the law in the different subjects. I thought I would tell him how far he could believe Collazo, and I showed him a copy of the report made by the collector.

April 27, 1922.

of Customs in the smuggling case of his father-in-law.

Friday, Apr. 28, 1922.

After my conversation this morning with Secretary Weeks, I sent you a cipher cablegram, which I hope you have understood, and which meant, as follows:

"Talk Secretary satisfactory. Will talk President together few days; removal Governor certain. Important letter today."

The Secretary was waiting for me and I explained to him that after all that had happened, both the friends of the Administration and a few of Reilly's friends, had a consultation and it was decided that it would be proper for me to come up and have a frank and heart-to-heart talk with both the President and the Secretary, and that I expected that after I had spoken to him (the Secretary) he would decide if it was convenient for me to see the President and if so, how far I should go into the details. I made clear to Weeks that I was neither defending nor attacking Reilly, that as long as he was kept in Porto Rico the Republican party would back him and uphold him, but that we thought it was our duty to tell the Administration the plain truth of the situation.

Secretary Weeks asked me to explain to him first, several matters which he had on his mind and he took them up in this order:

The inside facts of the grand jury matter.

The connection of both Collazo and Mestre in this matter of the investigation.

The meeting of Reilly with Barcelo, and who counseled Reilly to have such meeting.

The Shanton affair.

I explained to him, as far as he would let me, because he would interrupt and insist on changing subjects quickly, all about the charges brought before the grand jury, how they commenced, what Collazo did from the start and how the proposition made by the latter came about. At this point, I had to tell him about Judge Bonner's testimony before the grand jury, and when I told him that the Governor had dismissed Bonner from his last position as bank examiner, the Secretary lost patience, and agreed with me that that was a foolish thing to do. He asked me to get for him a copy of the grand jury's report, and I hope to

get a copy of The Progress that published said report. The Secretary was very much interested to hear that Collazo's proposition to Reilly was made in the presence of Mestre and that the latter did not make any objection or protest.

As to the meeting of the Governor and Barcelo in Salinas, Weeks asked me if his friends had counseled the Governor to take this step and when I told him that we knew nothing about it until after it had happened and that he even concealed the real facts from us, he was very much surprised. I then told him that Reilly had said to me that the Secretary had been urging him insistently to get together with the majority party and finish the fight. Weeks denied this, saying that the only time he ever spoke to the Governor about this fight was when he was returning to Porto Rico and he told him that he should remember, in dealing with the parties, that he was the Governor of all the people and should try to make it so appear in his dealings with the rights of all the parties, and that he never has ever written him again on the subject, and he certainly was not consulted as to these meetings in the home of the Spaniard, Mr. Gonzalez.

The Secretary wanted me to explain to him fully and in detail all about the Shanton affair, and I did so. He then told me that he had received on last Monday a cablegram from the Governor in connection with Shanton. Right here he said that every time he receives either a letter or a cable from the Governor, he is more convinced that something is wrong with the man. This cable said that he was willing to appoint Shanton to a certain position paying from twenty-five hundred to three thousand dollars, but he would need the approval of the Secretary. The latter answered Reilly that he could not give any such approval, that it was for the Governor to decide whether or not, if Shanton was unfit to be reinstated in his old job if he could properly be appointed to any other under the government.

I must say that during this conversation with the Secretary we were constantly interrupted by his confidential clerk on account of different parties calling Weeks on the long distance telephone, as well as to say that some important man was outside waiting. In any event, I had more than thirty minutes' talk, and yet I had not gone into any of the different matters which I had made up my mind to bring to his attention, and I saw immediately that I would not be able to monopolize all his morning and I asked him what his desires would be in the premises. He told me that the conversation was too important to be taken up in the way we were having it, but that he knew that the President would like to have all the facts, and he wanted me to go with him to see the President and tell him everything without concealing any detail whatever. As the President is out of town, Mr. Weeks said he would let me know by phone within three or four days when the interview would take place, and I left.

Apr. 28, 1922.

Before I got through with my conversation, I was able to tell Weeks the seriousness of the situation, as I saw it, and the danger of Reilly getting into hotter water at any time, which would then make it more difficult for the President to act. Right here, the Secretary told me that the President was well advised through him of the graveness of the situation, and was only awaiting some favorable moment to take a decisive step and he thought that my coming to Washington was very timely. He here also repeated the foolishness of Reilly in repeating the old story of his popularity in Porto Rico, and that of having larger crowds to meet him than Theodore Roosevelt did when he visited the Island. He said he remembered having read Reilly's inaugural address and after discarding a couple of sentences which he did not like, he approved it because it had a good American ring to it, although he did not relish the literary part of it.

I believe that from what I have written you in this letter, you will agree that the cablegram which I sent you was a true reflection of the situation. I will cable you again as soon as I have seen the President. I promised the Governor to write him and I am going to do so, trying to say as little as possible, as I am unable to tell him the whole truth of the situation. He did want me to send him a cablegram, collect, but the cable people refused to accept it that way and I did not see the reason for my spending eight or ten dollars.

After my conversation with Weeks, I saw Towner and he was very much interested and counseled me that I should conceal nothing from the President.

I am to have dinner tonight with Shanton, who has telephoned me about half a dozen times that he wants to have a talk with me.

I may have to leave town tomorrow because the hotels are all crowded on account of a Doctors Convention to be held next week, and my hotel told me that they could not take care of me after Saturday. I may have to go either to Baltimore or New York to sleep and come in every day to Washington, but I will leave Nixon on the job, so that he will advise me at any time.

Yours sincerely,