

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

OF
PORTO RICO

FROM
1898 TO 1923.

CONSIDERATIONS OF THEIR SCOPE.

PLATFORMS

OF THE
UNIONIST PARTY OF PORTO RICO

BY
ANTONIO R. BARCELÓ

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND PRESIDENT OF THE
UNIONIST PARTY OF P. R.

(FROM "THE BOOK OF PORTO RICO.

A JOINT RESOLUTION
RESENTLY PASSED BY THE LEGISLATURE
OF PORTO RICO.

TIP. "LA DEMORACIA"

SAN JUAN, P. R.

1923.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGIME.—At the time the change of sovereignty took place in 1898, as a result of the war between the United States and Spain, the Island had been able to obtain from the metropolis, after a struggle of many years, an autonomic

form of government, similar to that of Canada, which it had just begun to enjoy and the bases of which were, in synthesis the following:

A Parliament with two Chambers, a Governor, and five executive chiefs known as the Secretaries of State.

The Lower Chamber was elected by popular vote, the representatives apportioned one for every twenty-five thousand inhabitants.

The Higher Chamber or Council of Administration was composed of eight members elected by the people, by means of electors, and seven appointed by the King. Those appointed by the King had to be natives of Porto Rico or residents of the island for not less than four years.

The Governor was appointed by the King, and the five Secretaries of State by the Governor, chosen from among the members of the political party having the majority in Parliament.

FACULTIES OF PARLIAMENT. The Parliament was empowered to legislate on public education, public works and services, public health, mail, telegraph, police, public credit, banks, monetary system, agriculture, qualification of voters and electoral procedure, administrative organization, judicial, municipal and territorial division, insular budget with the obligation of including in it the expenses inherent to the Sovereignty fixed by the "Cortes" of the Kingdom (National Parliament), commercial treaties, tariffs, land and water transportation, taxes and duties and in general, on those questions affecting Porto Rico principally and which were not specifically and especially reserved to the "Cortes" by law.

The laws and resolutions of the Parliament were sanctioned or promulgated by the Governor, but when in his judgment they were prejudicial to the national or insular interests, he sent them, with his objections to the Council of Ministers of Spain, who could sanction or disapprove them within the term of sixty days at the end of which, if the Council had not taken action, it became the duty of the Governor to promulgate them. Parliament could, in case of disapproval, reconsider the law or resolution in accordance with the objections presented by the Council of Ministers and in this case such law or resolution was considered sanctioned.

The insular tariffs and treatises as well as the national ones affecting the Island, were discussed and approved by delegates from the National and Insular Parliaments, appointed in equal number, who had power to correct any discrepancy affecting the Island or the Nation, leaving always a protective margin on the tariff schedule in favor of the Island or Nation, not exceeding thirty-five per cent.

REPRESENTATION OF THE ISLAND IN THE SPANISH "CORTES" (PARLIAMENT). Porto Rico was represented at the National Parliament (Courts of the Kingdom) by deputies and senators elected in the Island, who intervened in all questions under the jurisdiction of said Parliament, with the same rights and privileges as the other members.

SECRETARIES OF STATE. The Secretaries of State in the Colony and the Ministers of the Crown in Spain, exercised the same powers in their respective governments. There were five secretaries, i. e., Attorney General; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Secretary of Public Education; Secretary of Public Works and Transportations (Of the Interior); Secretary of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce.

Parliament had power to increase or diminish the number of Secretaries and to determine the jurisdiction of each.

The deputies and Senators sent by the Island to Congress were chosen in general elections held throughout the Nation, every five years, or in elections convened by the King whenever the "Cortes" (Parliament) was dismissed on account of some ministerial crisis.

In the same way elections were held in the Island, every five years, for constituting the Insular Parliament, or every time the Governor, acting for the King, dismissed Parliament due to some crisis in his cabinet. In this case new elections had to be held within the ninety days following that dismissal.

THE GOVERNOR. The governor was the representative of the King, and exercised his power through the Secretaries of State. Every order or resolution passed by the governor had to be countersigned by the corresponding Secretary, according to the nature of the order or resolution, before it could have executive force.

TOWNSHIPS. The townships governed themselves autonomically in all those questions of a local character, which did not affect the general laws and could contract for loans for public works with the consent of their residents ad-referendum.

CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTY. The autonomical constitution of Porto Rico could not be modified except by law, and by petition of the Insular Parliament.

CHANGE OF SOVEREIGNTY

AMERICAN INVASION. On the 25th of July 1898, the United States Military forces landed at Guánica and Nelson A. Miles, the General in Chief, issued on the 28th of the same month a proclamation "To the inhabitants of the Island" in which he said:

"We have not come to make war upon the people of a country which has been for several centuries oppressed, but on the contrary, to bring protection to you and to your properties, exalting and imposing on you the guaranties and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government. It is not our purpose to interfere with existing laws and customs which are good and beneficial to your people, provided they are in accordance with the principles of the military administration and with those of order and justice."

TREATY OF PEACE. On April 11th, 1899, Congress ratified the treaty of peace between the United States and Spain, in virtue of which Porto Rico was ceded to the former, Congress retaining the power to determine the civil and political condition of the inhabitants of the Island.

MILITARY GOVERNMENT. On the 18th of October, 1899, an order was issued by the Military headquarters, which among other things, made the following statement:

"With the cession of Porto Rico and adjacent islands to the United States, the political bonds joining its inhabitants to the Spanish monarchy have been severed, and meanwhile, until Congress takes final action, the President of the United States, as General in Chief, has placed the recently acquired territory under military government, which is absolute and supreme."

And the Island, during this period of time, was governed by orders from General Headquarters.

LAWS OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES-FORAKER ACT

CIVIL GOVERNMENT FOR THE ISLAND. On the 12th of April, 1900, a law was passed known as the Foraker Act, entitled "An act temporarily to provide revenues and a civil government for Porto Rico, and for other purposes."

By means of this law the government of Porto Rico was organized with a governor appointed by the President as chief executive, an Executive Council, and a House of Delegates.

The Executive Council was composed of eleven members, appointed by the President, of whom five should be natives of Porto Rico.

The House was composed of thirty-five members, elected every two years by popular vote.

In virtue of this law the executive power was for over sixteen years vested in the Governor and the six members of the Council not natives of Porto Rico, who acted as chiefs of the departments created: Interior, Treasury, Auditor, Public Education, Executive Secretary, and Justice.

LEGISLATIVE POWERS. The House of Delegates had power to legislate on all matters of local character, except on franchises and concessions for public services, which were granted by the Executive Council and the governor. The laws and resolutions had to be approved by the Executive Council, which, when the Legislature was in session, acted as a legislative body also, forming, in this case, with the House of Delegates the Legislative Assembly of Porto Rico.

The tariffs and treatises of commerce, as well as the law in bankruptcy and others of vital importance were of the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, and were applied without limitations here. All Customs House receipts, as well as internal revenues, entered the Treasury of the Island to be used for the expenses and budgets of the Island.

REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS. A resident Commissioner at Washington, elected by the people of Porto Rico, represented the island, without voice or vote, in Congress.

CITIZENSHIP. The inhabitants of the Island were declared "citizens of Porto Rico", and, with the citizens of the United States residing here, were made into a body politically denominated as "The People of Porto Rico".

TOWNSHIPS. The townships were subjected to the action of the Legislative Assembly.

ACTIONS OF CONGRESS. Congress retained the power to legislate on the Island.

A RULE OF CONGRESS. By a rule of Congress the Resident Commissioner at Washington was authorized to speak in Congress.

JONES ACT

POLITICAL STATUS OF THE PORTO RICANS. By a law, passed on March 2, 1917, Porto Ricans were declared citizens of the United States and were given a term of six months in which to express their preference, by means of an oath before a Court, to remain under the old status of "Citizens of Porto Rico", losing thereby their rights to be voters or eligibles, or to discharge public offices in their country. Two hundred and eighty-eight Porto Ricans who resigned the American citizenship in this way, were deprived by disposition of the Organic Act, of the right to vote, be eligibles or occupy public offices in their country.

THE CONSTITUTION. By express and specific dispositions of the same law, the constitutional precepts of the United States and some special ones on legislative procedures, were applied to the Island.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. A Legislative Assembly was created composed of a Senate with nineteen members and a House of thirty-nine, both elected by the people. The Governor was given the power of absolute veto on budget matters and appropriations, and the conditional veto on other laws and resolutions, providing in the last case, that if two-thirds of both Houses voted a law over the Governor's veto, the latter could appeal to the President of the United States, who should decide for or against within the term of ninety days, at the expiration of which, no action having been taken, the law or resolution went into effect.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT. In addition to the departments

existing under the Foraker Act two more were established, one of Agriculture and Labor, and one of Health and the heads of these, together with those of the Treasury, the Interior and the Executive Secretary, are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The departments of Justice, Education, and the Auditor continued under the control of the President, as with the Foraker Act, the two latter acquiring more power than they had under the old law.

FRANCHISES FOR PUBLIC SERVICE. A Public Service Commission was created to attend to franchises and concessions for public services composed of the chiefs of Departments, the Auditor and two members elected by the people in general elections.

OTHER PROVISIONS. Practically all the other provisions of the Foraker Act remained in force with slight changes.

MANIFEST TENDENCIES

The author does not propose to enter into a comparative study of the fundamental laws outlined above, but prefers to let the reader form his own judgment and conclusions on this exceptionally important matter.

The mere examination of these laws shows, however, the tendency to provide the Island with a form of government with its own special features within the national organization. This, which as regards Spain, seemed logical and necessary in spite of the similarity between both countries, as regards the United States is becoming more indispensable every day, for obvious reasons.

Several American Statesmen, among them Stimpson, Root, and Taft, have agreed on this point, and have emphatically expressed their opinion contrary to the incorporation of Porto Rico. Taft, while president, declared, in a message to Congress recommending the granting of citizenship to the Porto Ricans, that such concession would not necessarily commit Congress to the incorporation of the Island later as a State. And the Supreme Court of the United States, in passing on questions involving the matter, has always decided in accordance with these conclusions.

A bill has been recently presented in the House, and another

in the Senate of the United States, by representative Campbell in the former and by Senator King in the latter, constituting Porto Rico into a free State, associated to the United States by the bonds of citizenship and the flag. The majority of the people approve of these bills in their basic idea. May it please to Heaven to enlighten everyone in this just and human accomplishment for the glory and honor of the United States and for the welfare of Porto Rico!

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

NATURAL DISPOSITION. Porto Ricans are convinced that it is an absolute necessity for them and a guaranty for their life as a free people to be associated permanently to the great nation which is the mother of liberty and democracy, and to which they are bound by natural links of interest and affinity.

They volunteered as soldiers to fight under the Stars and Stripes in the great world war, in which many died, while others to the number of fifteen thousand made ready to sail for Europe. They filled the quota assigned to them in the purchase of Liberty Loan Bonds and carried to completion every sort of work commended to them.

Lastly, the National Guard, Porto Rico section, has been classified as the first among all the states of the Union.

All this shows the natural disposition of the people of Porto Rico toward a better comprehension in their relations with the United States in the accomplishment of their aims and progress.

PROGRESS OF THE ISLAND. The Island has accomplished greater progress than some states of the Union with similar population and resources. Almost half of the total amount of the budget is spent for public education, not counting the amounts appropriated by each municipality for this service. It is expected that by the elimination of the adult illiterates existing in 1898, which is being accomplished gradually, through the action of time and by the agency of night schools and with the resources now applied, the percentage of illiteracy will very soon be of not more than fifteen per cent. Based on the number of children of school age only the Island is already very near this figure. The children

are taught English, besides, and almost all of them speak this language in addition to their own native tongue-Spanish.

There is in Porto Rico a University, a College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, eleven high schools, 1,275 graded schools and 1,702 rural schools, with an average daily attendance of 157,551 pupils. The teaching is mostly done in buildings especially constructed for the purpose out of the resources of the Island, and recently important loans have been floated for the construction of a great number of additional rural schools.

Roads traverse the island in every direction, so that there is not a single town that cannot be reached by automobile.

The municipalities improve greatly, and help out with considerable amounts of money in the work of public education.

In almost every town there are water works, hospitals, electric light, public hygiene service, and, in general, every requirement of modern life.

Approximately 700 policemen keep the order and peace, in which they are greatly aided by the peaceful disposition of the people of the Island, where there has never been a revolution, and any citizen may safely go to the most remote corner of the mountains with the assurance that he will find aid and hospitality from Porto Rico's honest rural laborers.

There is in the island a regiment formed of Porto Ricans incorporated to the U. S. Army, and elsewhere there are two more. The National Guard is composed of eighty-two officers, of which six belong to the Staff, sixty-four to the first regiment and twelve to the second regiment, and of 1,773 soldiers. It is fair to say that there has never been occasion to call out these troops to aid the police in maintaining order.

According to the statistics for the last five years, (1917 to 1921) the Island has had an average annual importation of \$76,240,620 and an export amounting to \$99,570,201. The annual average for those five years of the chief sources of production has been as follows: Sugar, \$62,975,045; Coffee, \$6,369,984; Cigars, \$8,270, 564; Fruits, \$3,541,489; Tobacco, leaf and scrap, \$9,647,604.

There is a complete judicial organization with municipal and

District Courts and a Supreme Court, of whose resolutions appeal may be made to the Circuit Court of Boston and to the Supreme Court of the United States. In the District Courts, the grand jury and the petit jury function. There is also a United States District Court for cases of federal jurisdiction, whose resolutions may be appealed in the same form as those of the Insular Supreme Court.

The legislature has made laws adapting itself to the modern spirit, whose movements it follows with great interest.

Every male citizen of over twenty-one years of age has a right to vote. The labor problem has received special attention by means of laws beneficial to the working classes, such as the eight hour law; the minimum wage for women; regulation of women's and children's work; guaranties of hygiene and protection while at work; compensation for accidents by means of insurance under the control of "The People of Porto Rico"; loans for building homes for workingmen which they can acquire at moderate prices, and pay for on long terms with a reduced interest; law of mediation and conciliation for cases of strikes and lockouts. It must be admitted, however, that the rural agricultural workers live under bad conditions, with scarcity of proper nourishment, and overburdened, a poor and miserable life.

FACING THE FUTURE

The food question is the most serious of the Island's problems. The excess population of the Island, with 135 inhabitants per square kilometer, is responsible for the reduction of wages, and the proportions attained by the sugar industry, controlling almost all the fertile lands, brings about the scarcity of land for the cultivation of other essential food products, which have to be imported from outside at high prices, with the consequent high cost of living.

If she were to reduce the sugar production by imposing limitations on the ownership of land, the excess unemployed labor could be even greater and the Island would be unable to remedy the situation by the introduction of new crops that require only very few hands.

Based on the foregoing the conclusion has been reached that the problem of the Island's working classes can only be

solved by the establishment of new industries which do not require the monopoly of the land (see article on New Industries in this book) and promoting at the same time the emigration of Porto Ricans, well educated and well prepared in her schools, so that they may exercise their ability, their work and their intelligence in their natural fields of expansion, for the welfare of the country to which they may go, and for the prestige and the benefit of their native land. The solution is: industries, schools, emigration.

In this way the Island of Porto Rico will be placed in an advantageous position to take part, as one of the most important factors in the progressive development of the countries of Central and South America, which are related to her by tradition, language and customs at the same time transmitting to those countries the sap of progress and of activity which she receives through her intercourse with the people of the United States.

THE UNION PARTY OF PORTO RICO

The party "Unión de Puerto Rico" (Union of Porto Rico) was organized in February, 1904, as a League of Patriots rather than an actual political party. Its aim was to ask the Congress of the United States for a system of government for Porto Rico of any one of the following types:

- (a) Autonomy or self-government;
- (b) Statehood;
- (c) An Independent Republic under the United States Protectorate.

"On November 22, 1913, the Party met in General Assembly and left out of its platform the Statehood Plank, public opinion in the United States and in Porto Rico having expressed itself openly against the incorporation of the Island as a classical state, the idea of organizing a special form of government prevailing.

Consequently, the "Union of Porto Rico" in its general assembly of February 11, 1922, stood for the following platform:

"That it always having been the supreme ideal of the Unionist Party—just as it has been and is that of all worthy peoples throughout History—the institution of a free country, master of its own destiny, for the present and the future;

"And it being highly desirable that for the better assurance of said liberty there must exist an Association of a permanent and indestructible character, between the Island and the United States of America, the advantages and conveniences of which can be conceived of from what has been derived for both the United States and Porto Rico out of a mere association during the last twenty-three years, and the results of such association being felt beyond the territorial limits of Porto Rico and the United States, because far beyond those limits said Association would revive many hopes and cause the disappearance of many fears; it is resolved by the party "Unión de Puerto Rico" gathered in Supreme Assembly: that the founding in Porto Rico of a state, country or a community which may be free and may be associated with the United States of America, is the aim and aspiration of Porto Ricans, thus solving honestly, satisfactorily and finally the problem pending solution as to what are to be the relations between both countries.

"In virtue of the above the Assembly declares that the creation of the Free Associated State of Porto Rico is from this day on, the Program of the party "Unión de Puerto Rico", and to the realization of that Program the glorious party will devote all its earnest efforts; that party which was founded in a solemn hour by immortal men of our country, and which is yet bound to create, just as they do, an immortal work."

The purpose of the "Union of Porto Rico" as regards other subjects remains the same as in former assemblies.

In the Assembly held in Mayaguez in 1912, the following declaration was issued:

"The Unionist Party will not support anarchistic doctrines nor systems disturbing the common life and harmony of the different social elements, but it does declare that the proletariat more than any other class needs the help and solidarity of the country. Porto Rican laborers should receive higher wages, own their own homes, have sufficient food and clothing and decent footwear, and their labor should be limited to eight hours a day, with the enjoyment, in their sad condition, of all the moral and physical pleasure that life affords. We also demand laws which, without whimsical limitations, will establish compensation for labor accidents, cooper-

ative societies, shop hygiene, premiums for perseverance and intelligence in manual labor, pensions for labor invalids, regulation and protection of women and child labor, and loans enabling laborers to acquire homes at low prices payable on long terms. We desire, without vain formulas, but by tangible acts, to strengthen each day the social brotherhood that obliges the leaders of the people to feel the sorrows of the people and to remedy them insofar as power to do so is given them, thus rendering fervent homage to the new world era through the sentiment of human fraternity."

In 1920 a general assembly of the Party ratified the foregoing declaration, adding:

"According to the finality pursued by the Unionist Party it is the party's policy more efficiently to prepare the people morally, politically and economically for the exercise of the rights and duties of free citizens capable of handling their own affairs, and it will not hesitate in solving the problems affecting human life which are condensed in democracy's august trinity: Liberty. Equality and Fraternity. And in this effort it will not yield the position which it holds in the conception and execution of ideas compatible with conditions of human nature.

"The Unionist Party, therefore, upholds the principle of liberty which consecrates man's inalienable rights to the free expression of thought and to the organization of all classes for the purpose of establishing their just claims for social and financial improvement. It also upholds that principle of equality which is based on the acknowledgement of the innate privilege of each individual, as increased by the fruit of his labor, study, volition and abnegation, and the principle of fraternity which does away with prejudices of race, religion, and social standing in the interest of greater harmony in the community.

"The social problem, it might be said, is the sole and fundamental problem. All others are inherent therein because they converge towards the organization of the individual for his relations with other beings in the formation of communities that make up a people and a nation. Thus the political problem is inherent in the social so far as it tends to establish the constitutional formula or system of government serving as a rule for human

initiative and activities. And so also is the financial problem which establishes the means necessary for the development of the community along all lines.

"Laws protecting rights and regulating duty, justice, public education, health, charity, finance, agriculture, commerce, industries, banks, means of transportation, public works and services and, in short, everything representing life and progress should be looked after with the purpose of raising to the highest possible degree the moral and material level of the people.

"Since the year 1905, when the Unionist Party, through its majority began to act in the Legislature, it has directed its effort and all its diligence to the satisfactory solution of these problems of public character in conformity with the powers granted by the Organic Act the resources at its command."

Following the above declarations the Union Party of Porto Rico added some others in concise form, regarding Public Education Health and Beneficence; Agriculture, Industry and Commerce; Justice, Public Works and Public Services; Labor and Finance in order that they might serve as a guide to legislators in their aim to better each one of these branches of the Insular Administration.

Regarding Education, "The Union Party favors the teaching of English as a subject in our schools, making it as extensive as may be necessary, but it is opposed to the use of any language other than that of the country as a means for the transmission of knowledge."

The Unionist Party declares also that "public education is the basis on which all properly understood democracy stands. School is the training ground of future generations to substitute the present in the direction of public problems, and it is necessary to provide equal opportunities for all citizens without privileges, offering to the poorer classes the means of learning and of obtaining an education commensurate with their capabilities. This is a task that pertains exclusively to the public power. It is from the bottom, from the environment where move the beings who suffer and struggle, that come the souls tempered and prepared by suffering conscientiously to direct, with rectitude and fairness, the interests of the community. In modern democracies the poorest and most obscure citizens have almost always been the

ones to reach the high public posts, and the greater geniuses of history have come from the anonymous numbers of the unhappy masses. The Unionist Party renders tribute to and acknowledges this unquestionable truth.

"Agriculture, industry and commerce, the fundamental bases of the country's financial prosperity, demand in this island more than elsewhere an assiduous protection favoring the development of our wealth and preventing monopoly and the high cost of articles necessary to life. The establishment of modern scientific measures to obtain products that will meet the needs of the country and compete with those of foreign origin, as well as the development of industries affording an outlet for those products and furnishing work for laborers, is as necessary, it might be said, as education, because, if one represents the moral, the other represents the material part of life, each being the complement of the other in their finality, and neither being able to exist without the other.

"Commerce should also be regulated so as to make difficult all unreasonable speculation tending to raise the cost of living and which fills the coffers of a few, while the people, represented by the middle class and the proletariat, squirm in misery and despair. Cooperative societies may be a simple remedy for this evil and we already have on our statute books a law allowing and protecting them, but it may be necessary to intervene in a more effective manner in order to avoid the serious threats that sordid selfishness always maintains in the life of the community.

"The obstacle offered by constitutional prescriptions frequently makes it difficult for our legislature to adopt radical measures to prevent this grave evil which concerns not only Porto Rico but the whole world. However we must continue to study and to seek the remedy in wise and prudent legislation which without curtailing the scope of legitimate and necessary mercantile transactions, will make it impossible for monopoly and usury to thrive thereunder."

These are, in short, the fundamental ideas of the Unionist Party of Porto Rico, expressed in its platform and for which it has stood and stands in its live activities for the better-

ment and happiness of the country, without limiting itself to political activities of a mere political character, but also asking all possible aid from all well-meaning organizations and individuals, to help it in its endeavors for a greater and better Porto Rico.

Joint Resolution passed by the Legislature of Porto Rico by unanimous vote of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which bodies are composed of representatives of the Unionist Party of Porto Rico, the Porto Rican Republican Party and the Socialist Party.

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A COMMISSION TO GO TO WASHINGTON TO PROMOTE REFORMS TO THE ORGANIC ACT OF PORTO RICO. AS WELL AS ALL SUCH MATTERS AS RELATE TO THE FINANCIAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF PORTO RICO.

WHEREAS, The time has come for a unanimous voice to be raised in Porto Rico requesting the Congress of the United States to declare its policy as regards the final status of our Island;

WHEREAS, It is proper that the Legislature of Porto Rico, now in session and composed of the representatives of the different opinions prevailing in the Island, should be the body to formulate said petitions and to establish before the Congress and the President of the Nation, through a Commission appointed from among the members of said Legislature, all such demands as the present situation may require in the political as well as in the financial and social order;

WHEREAS, The present Governor of Porto Rico, Honorable Horace M. Towner, has expressed in his message to the Legislature his favorable opinion of the foregoing proposition, as well as his conformity and willingness to give full support to a delegation so constituted; and

WHEREAS, The Resident Commissioner for Porto Rico in Washington, Honorable Félix Córdova Dávila, as a member of the Congress of the United States and as Representative of the People of Porto Rico in said Congress, should and will give his support to the work of said Commission;

WHEREAS, The 68th Congress will meet on December 4th next, and it is advisable and necessary for the Commission to be in the United States in sufficient time to advocate with the President of the United States the inclusion in his next message to Congress, if he deems it opportune, of such recommendations as are most in harmony with such reforms as the Commission may request;

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it resolved by the Legislature of Porto Rico:

Section 1.—To designate from among its members a Commission composed of the President of the Senate and four members thereof to be designated by him, and by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and four members thereof to be designated by him, which Commission shall have power to promote and work for the modifications hereinafter enumerated; Provided, That the three political parties at present holding seats in the Legislature of Porto Rico shall be represented on said Commission.

Section 2.—To request the present Governor of Porto Rico, Honorable Horace M. Towner, in his official capacity to form part of said Commission as a member ex-officio.

Section 3.—To provide that upon reaching the city of Washington, D. C., and during such time as the Commission may remain in the United States, it shall cooperate in its work with the Resident Commissioner for Porto Rico in Washington, Honorable Félix Córdova Dávila.

Section 4.—To empower said Commission to go to Washington or to such other places in the United States as it may deem advisable in connection with its work, sufficiently in advance of the meeting of the next Congress, in consonance with the fifth Whereas of this Joint Resolution; and to recommend to said Com-

mission that it advocate before the Congress and the President of the United States, the introduction into the Organic Act of Porto Rico of such modifications as are implied by the provisions hereinafter enumerated:

(a) That the Congress, as well as the President of the United States of America, declare the purposes of said authorities as regards the final status of the Island of Porto Rico:

(b) That the Legislature of Porto Rico be granted power to legislate without restriction on all local matters:

(c) That the People of Porto Rico shall elect their Governor by vote of their qualified electors:

(d) That all appointments now made by the President of the United States with the approval of the Federal Senate, shall hereafter be made by the Governor of Porto Rico with the advice and consent of the Insular Senate:

(e) That the Island be granted power to legislate on all its financial problems, and to regulate the acquisition of lands, and to levy local excise or internal revenue taxes to be collected in benefit of the Insular Treasury, and in general on all such measures as may be demanded by the interests and needs of Porto Rico which are not in conflict with such other measures of the same nature as are of a national character; and

(f) That all such measures of a national character that tend to benefit education, agriculture and other sources of knowledge or of wealth in the Island, shall be extended to Porto Rico in the same proportion in which they are extended to all the States of the American Union.

Section 5.—The aforesaid Commission constituted in the form stated, and on recommendation of the President of the Senate and of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and with the approval of the Auditor of Porto Rico and the Governor, shall appoint, in accordance with law, one paymaster, who shall also be secretary of said Commission and who shall be in charge of the disbursement of the funds hereby appropriated to defray the expenses thereof, and shall also have all the duties and attributes

that the Commission itself may assign to him, so far as the same are not in conflict with the general legal provisions governing such officials: **Provided,** That the Commission itself shall fix the salary, traveling expenses and per diems of such officer.

Section 6.—To defray the expenses of said Commission, and for such work as it may do in carrying out provisions as it may make and deem convenient in benefit of the Island of Porto Rico, the sum of fifty thousand (50,000) dollars is hereby appropriated.

Section 7.—All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 8.—This Act is declared to be of an urgent and necessary character, and shall take effect immediately after its approval

Approved, July 24, 1923.

