

Spanish America hails Cartwright bill

THE introduction of a bill for Puerto Rican Independence in the present Congress by Representative Wilburn Cartwright of Oklahoma—it was presented on February 18—has already had three strikingly noticeable effects. It has given new hope to the overworked and underfed thousands in Puerto Rico who have been for so long on the verge of economic chaos.

Overnight it has made Mr. Cartwright himself a figure of importance and significance in every Spanish American country, commented upon by press and radio from Mexico City to Buenos Aires, in La Paz and Tegucigalpa and Habana and Valparaiso. And it is concrete evidence that the Good Neighbor policy of the Administration has practical effectiveness and a validity which has hitherto been called into question all too often by sceptics who speak Spanish.

Independence is indeed the only solution of the insular problem which seems to work toward the best interests of both Puerto Rico and the United States. Moreover, the fact that Puerto Rican independence does not directly affect Oklahoma in any way, except insofar as it appeals to Oklahoma's sense of justice and to that larger patriotism which would help all men everywhere toward life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, is shining evidence that in presenting this bill Mr. Cartwright has acted from conviction, and without ulterior motive. Indirectly, of course, it does help Oklahoma and all other northern tax-payers.

As a former student of the University of Oklahoma, and a former contributing editor to *The Sooner Magazine*, the writer rejoices that it has been an Oklahoman and an O. U. graduate who has made this fresh affirmation of the underlying principles of the American commonwealth.

The situation in Puerto Rico is too grave for half-way remedies. On this small crowded island, close on to two million people live in conditions growing steadily worse because of many factors, of which the most immediately important is sugar. Sugar is the source of Puerto Rico's apparent wealth and real poverty. Up to 70 per cent of the total output is absentee-owned, so that the millions of dollars which the crop produces leave the island for France, Spain, and continental America, never to return. The families of workers in the canefields have to live on an average of \$125 a year—and the families are large and the cost of living high. The small farmers, hag-ridden by

By Muna Lee, '14ex

debt, are being progressively crowded out or reduced to a sort of super-peonage.

Moreover, United States tax-payers have to send money down at the rate of one million dollars a month as a charitable contribution to stave off starvation in a land where anemia resulting from undernourishment has long been considered, and called, "the natural death." The sugar millions that go up to the states are of no more benefit to the man-on-the-street paying taxes and buying sugar at the corner grocery in Oklahoma than they are to the Puerto Rican laborer who, as Luis Muñoz Marín has said, "works in the canefields but can't afford to drink his coffee sweetened."

The Cartwright bill proposes to relieve this anomalous situation by making it possible for an independent Puerto Rico to make her own commercial treaties and

by providing a mutually beneficial reciprocity arrangement. An independent Puerto Rico would continue to be a good friend of the United States and would be a much better, because much more prosperous, customer.

When the inspiring news of the introduction of the Cartwright bill reached the island, messages of heartfelt appreciation began streaming into Washington. Among them was a letter from native-born Puerto Ricans, graduates of leading universities in the United States, who hailed this "attempt to solve, in an amicable and democratic way, the problems which the present status of our island have created both in the United States and in Puerto Rico."

"All of us," the letter to Mr. Cartwright continues, "are graduates of American universities, and believe in establishing a sound basis for mutual friendship and appreciation. We deeply desire the welfare of the nation you so honorably represent. We are, naturally, even more earnest in the desire for the welfare of our own island. Fortunately, we feel certain that these desires do not constitute a dilemma, but that they are, rather perfectly harmonizable wishes.

"We have given thought to the many questions involved in our political status, and have come to the conclusion that independence is desirable from the standpoint of Puerto Rico and from the standpoint of the United States.

"Thirty-eight years of experience have taught us that it is painfully difficult, if not altogether impossible, to reach a working system of beneficial co-operation under colonial subjection, no matter how attenuated or disguised. The lack of contiguity of this detached portion of territory, the distance from Washington, the difference in language, habits, and cultural traditions, etc., tend to breed insurmountable misunderstanding. The nature of colonial administration in general is in itself cause of confusion and resentment both in the metropolis and in the island. A clear example of the above is the fact that Americanism means one thing on the mainland and altogether a different thing in Puerto Rico. We, who have lived several years in the states, can vouch for that.

"The reorganization or reconstruction of the island's economy cannot be successfully approached as long as the United States controls our political life. Puerto Rico is a small territory, with limited resources, overpopulated and depending

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Rep. Wilburn Cartwright, '20

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Medical Adventures In Ethiopia

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or could prevent the proper development or maturation of crops. He lived in fear of the ravages of wild pigs, baboons, and other animals destructive to crops.

At one time they were in mortal fear of the foreigners, a rumor having been started to the effect that the foreigners were eating the natives. And they are afraid of the devil who is believed to inflict certain diseases. They fear the witches, and especially they fear a curse imposed by him or even in his name. They fear and worship the snake, the lion and certain other creatures.

And I have come to the place where I can appreciate and understand to an extent these feelings and problems of my adopted people.

While I do not share their fears, I have become aware to a certain degree, at least, of the power and the reality of these fears and in a sense I feel that I have experienced them.

I have completed two terms of service in Ethiopia having gone there first in June, 1926, after five months in the School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in London.

The country has got a very strong hold upon our entire family. Even our little three-year-old girl, when she sees pictures of Ethiopia, cries and says, "I want to be there."

We hope to return to our adopted people when our furlough is over.

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Portrait of a Sooner

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for an event in which they had no special training!

Keith was sports editor of the *Oklahoma Daily* in 1927 and 1928. He also served as assistant editor of the *Daily* during his first year in the University.

The incident related at the beginning of this article—Keith's being called upon to settle a bet about some sports fact—happens oftener than you might imagine. And he is the supreme court for hearing any such arguments; his word is accepted as final.

So if you want the exact score of a basketball game played five years ago, the name of the player who scored the most points, and possibly how many boos the referee got or who sprained an ankle—just stop that yellow-thatched young man at the fieldhouse (he probably will be wearing a red sweater with

an "O" on it) and he'll be glad to comb through those scrapbooks until he has the right answer for you.

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on agriculture for its subsistence. The United States, on the other hand, is one of the largest countries in the world, sparsely populated, commanding untold wealth in natural resources and fundamentally an industrial nation.

"The interests of both countries could be harmonized only by bargaining on a basis of equality and freedom of action; but they become clashing antagonistic when the Puerto Rican solutions have to submit to American policies, institutions and procedures which Puerto Rico has no power to modify and no participation in establishing, promulgating, and enforcing. The tariff policy and the coastwise shipping laws are but two examples of these problems. Furthermore, the great national and international responsibilities of American administrations do not allow them to engage their best talent, or to devote enough time and care, to solve the many tangles of the Puerto Rican situation in a fair and adequate way, no matter how well-disposed those administrations may be.

"The only other true alternative to independence, the admission of Puerto Rico as a state of the union, is really no alternative at all, because, even if American statesmen and public opinion had not discouraged that solution in unmistakable language during this past third of a century, and even if the people of Puerto Rico were anxious to lose their traditional personality and desirous of being totally absorbed by the American melting pot, even if there were no serious and obvious political obstacles and drawbacks (from the national viewpoint) to Puerto Rican statehood—still the facts enumerated above would remain to produce, in the economic field, the same results as have brought about the present Puerto Rican plight and American discredit.

"We are fully conscious that independence for Puerto Rico is far from being a cure-all. But we are satisfied that in independence lies our only hope. Furthermore, we believe that any fair minded American who studies the problem objectively and fully will agree with us. We feel justified in hoping that enlightened public opinion in the United States will come to regard independence for Puerto Rico as a mutually beneficial solution of a common problem and will help in attaining it. We certainly need all the help we can get."