

Pend. de
reunión
9 Feb 53
MAR.

January 30, 1953

Luis:

Here is a draft of a suggested letter to the new Secretary. I think it is urgent that you write him something to call Puerto Rico to his attention and to clarify the present relationship. It will be to Puerto Rico's advantage to do this before Jim Davis leaves so he can fill in any further information to the Secretary.

I have shown this to Picó. I've been thinking about this problem since November and this is in my opinion the best position at this particular time. I'd like to discuss it further with you.

*Invas
dice
Nov.*

Notas en lopez de

A. Cruz

M.G.

Mary Gresham

Mar

*Pendientes de reunión
para U.S. - U.M.
Feb 8*

Lama

Letter to Secretary of Interior,
Douglas McKay

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was established July 25, 1952 after all legal steps necessary were completed including enactment of Public Law 600 by the Congress of the United States, the drafting of a constitution by duly elected members of a Constitutional Assembly in Puerto Rico, and formal approval by Congress and the people of Puerto Rico. This achievement of complete self government marked the fulfillment of the political aspirations of our people and was a just reward for the development of our democracy and responsibility of our government over the years.

We have also moved rapidly forward in our social and economic development. Twelve years ago we were an underdeveloped area with all the problems common to such areas. In those twelve years we have reduced our death rate to the equivalent of the average in the continental United States, we have almost eliminated illiteracy, we have extended electricity, sewage and potable water to every municipality on the island, we have built dams and reservoirs for the development of hydroelectric power and for irrigation, we have by intensive effort brought over 200 new industries to this island adding 50,000 (?) additional new jobs so necessary to the solution of our unemployment problems. Our planned integrated development program has provided a "laboratory in self-help" for trainees and observers from all over the world. During the past three years approximately 500 trainees and visitors from 40 countries have come to Puerto Rico under the various technical assistance programs. We are proud to have jointly financed this program with the Federal government. To date, the Legislature of Puerto Rico has appropriated over \$100,000 for this program.

The most important part of all this, however, is that we are raising the standard of living of our people, developing a sound democracy and setting an example to all free people of the world of how with determination and desire a poverty stricken people can help themselves.

We still have a long way to go, but our social, economic and political progress thus far is encouraging and gratifying.

We recognize that our new status as a Commonwealth has removed us from the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of Interior. However, we are in hopes that certain functions and services performed in the past will be continued. Since we are not a federated state, we do not have voting representation in Congress. It is important therefore that some Federal agency under a cabinet member be the spokesman for our interest before Congress and among Federal agencies.

We have a long established relationship with your Department. Many persons in that agency are familiar with our history, our problems and our present efforts to solve them. It seems logical to us therefore, that the Department of Interior continue to represent the Commonwealth particularly in securing

desirable legislation, in insuring that trade agreements not work an unreasonable hardship on our economy and in calling our needs and desires to the attention of other agencies when necessary. If in your judgement these functions should remain in the Office of Territories, we believe the name of that office should be changed to reflect our present status. A title such as "Office of Territories and Commonwealth", "Office of Offshore Areas" or "Office of Overseas Areas" would more accurately describe the political and geographical areas in which that office operates.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the very important position of Secretary of Interior and wish you continued success in your public service. You are cordially invited to be our guest in Puerto Rico at your earliest convenience. We look forward to seeing you either here or in Washington in the near future.

JAN 30 1953

D R A F T

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