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INDIA QUESTIONS STATUS OF PUERTO RICO

Renewed discussion of full statehood for Puerto Rico was forecast Sept. 1 when the United Nations Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories hotly debated the U. S. claim that Puerto Rico is now fully self-governing, and finally passed the issue on to the General Assembly in a non-committal resolution.

Puerto Ricans have no vote for Congress or President but are subject to U. S. conscription.

Powers administering colonies are bound by Article 73e of the Charter to report information on them, but as a state Puerto Rico's self-governing status would not be open to question. Mme. Lakshmi N. Menon of India maintained the new Commonwealth constitution of Puerto Rico did not provide full self-government.

Months earlier Prof. Rupert Emerson, writing in the special issue of The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science on Puerto Rico (Jan. '53), dealt with the same question. Although endorsing on balance a U.S. refusal to report more information to the UN, Prof. Emerson pointed out that one of the essential criteria for true self-government set up by the UN is: "Representation without discrimination in the central legislative organs on the same basis as other inhabitants and regions." Prof. Emerson continued:

"Here Puerto Rico clearly falls down, since it has not been brought into the American Union on terms of equality with the other component parts. The difficulty is made worse by the fact that the American delegates at the Assembly supported the inclusion of this factor, in part because of its general soundness, but also in part with an eye to the achievement by Alaska and Hawaii of their long-sought statehood."

R. G. Tugwell, former Governor, emphatically endorsed statehood in the same issue of the Annals "because no proud and achieving people can go on being excluded from participation in the highest political processes of the nation of which it is a part."

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To celebrate the first anniversary of Puerto Rico's commonwealth constitution July 25, the National Broadcasting Corporation carried a nation-wide address by President Luis Muñoz Marin, and on August 5 the United States rendered what it declared would be its final report under Article 73e.

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