HOUSE, INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

Suffrage for Porto Rico.
70-1.

Apr. 30, 1928.
SUFFRAGE FOR PORTO RICO

HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON INSULAR AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SEVENTIETH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
ON
H. R. 7010
A BILL TO AMEND THE ORGANIC ACT OF PORTO RICO
APPROVED MARCH 2, 1917

APRIL 30, 1928

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COMMITTEE ON INSULAR AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEVENTIETH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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The committee this day met at 10.30 o'clock a.m., Hon. Edgar R. Kiess, chairman, presiding, for consideration of H. R. 7010, which is a bill introduced by Mr. Kiess to amend the organic act of Porto Rico, approved March 2, 1927. The bill reads as follows:

A BILL To amend the organic act of Porto Rico, approved March 2, 1917

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the proviso contained in section 35 of an act entitled "An act to provide a government for Porto Rico, and for other purposes," approved March 2, 1917, be, and the same is hereby, amended to read as follows: Provided, That no property qualifications shall ever be imposed upon or required of any voter: And provided further, That the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex.

Mr. Davila. I should like to see a copy of the bill passed by the Senate of Porto Rico in connection with woman suffrage inserted in the record at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. Very well.

Mr. Davila. There is only one copy available and it will have to be copied. It says:

[S. B. 3, Eleventh Legislature of Porto Rico, third session]

AN ACT Concerning amendments to the election law, and prescribing the vote for women in the election of 1932

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Porto Rico:

SECTION 1. A section which shall be called "Section 15a" is hereby added to section 15 of the "Election and registration law," and which shall read as follows:

"Sec. 15a. In the general election to be held in 1932, and in subsequent years, the following shall have a right to vote:

"(a) All registered voters who voted in the general election of 1928, as they appear on the voting lists in the hands of the insular board of elections.

"(b) Every man or woman of 21 years, or over, on the day of the election, who knows how to read and write, and who also has the other qualifications prescribed by law."

Sec. 2. The capacity of voters in regard to their knowledge of reading and writing shall be determined by a certificate testifying to such capacity, obtained from one of the public schools of the municipality where the voter resides: Provided, That the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the Insular Board of Elections, shall designate the teachers in each municipality who may issue said certificates: And provided further, That the Commissioner of Education shall, with the approval of the Insular Board of Elections, draft regulations and prescribe the manner of examining the voter applying for said certificate. Any teacher appointed by the commissioner to examine voters and to grant them the above-mentioned certificates, who misuses the authority hereby conferred upon him, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, in addition to the penalty which may be imposed, shall be removed from office, and the Commissioner of Education shall cancel his teacher's certificate.

Sec. 3. The general supervisor of elections shall provide special polling places where women may vote in the same manner as is prescribed by law for men. The members of the polling places, as well as the challengers, shall be women.

Sec. 4. All laws or part of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Sec. 5. This act shall take effect 90 days after its approval.
The Chairman. Miss Mary Caroline Taylor, 5719 Dorchester Avenue, Chicago, Ill., a representative of the National Woman's Party, will direct the order of calling the proponents of this bill who desire to be heard. Miss Taylor.

Miss Taylor. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we are here to present a request that your honorable committee favorably report this bill to the House. As has been stated, I represent the National Woman's Party, with which the Liga Social Sufragista of Porto Rico is associated.

Of course we are ready to cooperate by every means in our power with the women of Porto Rico in their aspirations to advance. We obtained suffrage for women of the United States by a national amendment in 1920, as you know, and we feel that the same suffrage might well have then been extended to women of our insular possessions who are citizens of the United States.

Since that was not done, we feel that the omission should be remedied as quickly as possible.

We have with us this morning two members of the Liga Social Sufragista of Porto Rico who would like to be heard. They will speak for and on behalf of the women of Porto Rico in this matter. Let me first introduce Dr. Marta Robert, secretary of the Liga Social Sufragista and director of the Maternity Hospital of Porto Rico, San Juan, P. R.

STATEMENT OF DR. MARTA ROBERT, SECRETARY OF THE LIGA SOCIAL SUFRAGISTA OF PORTO RICO AND DIRECTOR OF THE MATERNITY HOSPITAL, SAN JUAN, P. R.

The Chairman. We shall be glad to hear what you have to say concerning this matter, Doctor Robert.

Doctor Robert. We Porto Rican women are American citizens and members of the oldest and biggest of the societies we have in Porto Rico. We are here to request you gentlemen of the American Congress to pass this bill to amend the organic act of Porto Rico by giving the women of Porto Rico the right to vote in their own country. We would like to have the same rights enjoyed by the women of the United States.

Of course there are other suffrage associations in Porto Rico, but they have not been able to send their delegates to Washington, even though it was very much desired to do so. However, we have cables from them sent to the Congressmen, so that the Congress might know just how they felt about the matter. Those cablegrams are a matter of record.

Mr. Davila, our Commissioner, has communications from some members of these organizations and associations in Porto Rico and those communications ask him to represent them as in favor of the bill.

This might seem somewhat strange to you, that we come to you asking for the enactment of a law in order to give the women of Porto Rico a right to vote, whereas that right to confer the suffrage upon women was vested in the Legislature of Porto Rico, also. In that respect we are experiencing nothing more than what the American women experienced before they received the privilege of suffrage. They tried to get it through their local legislatures, as I am informed,
but they were unsuccessful, and they had to come to the Congress and ask for the same thing we are asking for.

Our senate in Porto Rico has favorably passed this bill on two occasions, but it has never been passed by the house of representatives. The failure to pass it is not because we are not prepared for suffrage. The legislators there realize that we are prepared. We have only had the same trouble that men themselves had in Porto Rico at one time.

We are all natives of Porto Rico and therefore are citizens of the United States. We go into all kinds of professions, into business, into industry. We are in all public offices. We hold all kinds of positions in Porto Rico and we have given ample proof of our efficiency and our preparedness for the exercise of the franchise.

The women of Porto Rico, long before the amendment to the Constitution was introduced, were working and struggling hard to get their political rights. In 1919 we were successful in getting the first bill for woman suffrage introduced in our legislature, but, of course, it was just introduced and we did not progress with it very much. We introduced another bill in 1923, and in 1925 we had still another, but they were all introduced in different legislatures and none of them got anywhere.

In 1925, therefore, when we came to Washington and got acquainted with some prominent members of the National Woman's Party, they advised us to get some action from Congress. Therefore we went back with that idea in mind, and it was very favorable for us that in the last session of Congress a bill was introduced in the Senate of the United States providing woman suffrage for Porto Rico. It has been proclaimed time and time again in public manifestations and in political programs that we are eminently fitted for the right of suffrage. This modern women's suffrage is the basis of all political programs in Porto Rico at this time. The majority party in Porto Rico has a woman-suffrage plank in its platform. The Republican Party has it, too. Moreover, the Socialist Party has a plank providing for woman suffrage.

As I have said, the senate has passed this bill. Before they did that I have no doubt that they were convinced that the women of Porto Rico were prepared for the suffrage, but when the bill reached the house of representatives it seems that for some political or other reason the members of the house thought it better not to act this year.

Being discouraged at the long delays that we have suffered in our efforts to effect the passage of this bill, we decided to come to the Congress of the United States. We decided that it was very much better for us to have this bill passed by the American Congress, which gave the right of vote to the American women.

We think we are justified in that section. Our organic act of 1917 gave the right of vote to citizens of the United States. It provided that voters should be citizens of the United States, 21 years of age or over, and have such educational qualifications as may be prescribed by the Legislature of Porto Rico, provided that no property qualification shall ever be imposed upon or required of anyone. The Legislature of Porto Rico is composed exclusively of men. When the legislature went to considering this matter of voting the first thing they did in our election law was to make a discrimination among the voters on account of sex.
The CHAIRMAN. In 1917, when the organic act for Porto Rico was passed, we did not have woman suffrage in the United States.

Doctor ROBERT. That is true. If this amendment had been passed before that I am sure that Congressmen would have thought differently about it. We ought to have that same thing in our organic act, because it is going to become a constitutional act.

As is known, there are more than 30 countries now that have admitted women to suffrage, and we Porto Rican women are the same as all the remainder of the women of the world, from the standpoint of biology.

There is a feeling among our men that if we obtained our political franchise our maternal duties and our domestic duties would be the first to suffer. I dispute that, because there are a lot of women in Porto Rico who have been working for a long time. They go every day and spend long hours working outside.

They leave their children and they leave their homes, and yet their children and their homes are well taken care of by others. Therefore, if these women go to work and leave their children at home, why can they not go for a little while every four years and vote for the uplift or maintenance of their common country? According to my way of thinking, there is no logical argument against our voting.

Then there is the argument that we possess the Latin traditions and they may hamper us in the exercise of our franchise and may hinder our social conditions. We belonged to Spain for a long time, and in Spain at this very time they have the right to vote—the women have—therefore we have been left behind, yet we are under the American Constitution. It is interesting to think that Spain is far more advanced in the matter of suffrage than our own country. This is not caused by that Latin feeling at all.

We are sure that if women get to form part of the government, or at least to have the right to vote for their representatives and for their government officials, and have to say who shall hold office and govern the people, we think that would be better for the island, much better than having men rule us who are appointed by the United States.

In order to properly legislate for women the legislature should be composed of some women. When men exclusively compose the legislature, not understanding the problems of women, the women will not get that full and just consideration to which they are entitled. Men do not have the feelings and knowledge possessed by women and which is so essential to proper legislation affecting women.

As I have stated, we women of Porto Rico think we are properly prepared for the right of suffrage. Since the time of the Spanish rule we have been educated, taught, and cultured. Before the United States went to Port Rico, of course, we were not allowed in professional affairs, but we have great women in literature and art, and after the Americans came to Porto Rico the women were admitted to all the professions. As I inferred a little while ago, we have doctors, dentists, lawyers, pharmacists, and many women in other lines of endeavor. We have women everywhere, and I am glad to add they have amply demonstrated their efficiency. We really think that men need us in our country in all lines of human endeavor. We are needed because we necessarily have higher understanding of the necessities of life. We rear children, we educate children, we know the needs of children better than do men. Therefore, if we know what our
children need, we know what is necessary in the home, and I think we can determine better than men what our country needs. [Applause.]

We think that women should have a right to interfere in our government. We would like to see how our laws are going to protect our women more than we see at the present time. We would like to see how our laws are going to protect our children. We would like to have a part in the gathering and expenditure of the public moneys. We would like to see that it is gathered justly and expended properly and in the best interests of our common country. Women are more economical than men. We know very well how to handle our own property and know it better than men do in our country.

Some people may say that it is not just the right thing for the women of Porto Rico to come to Washington and ask you American men to grant us this suffrage, because the Legislature of Porto Rico itself has that power. This is not taking any rights at all away from the people of Porto Rico. To grant the passage of this bill would simply be to admit that the women of Porto Rico are amply prepared for suffrage and that the American Congress recognizes it. Then, if women are prepared, men necessarily must be prepared. I do not see that the passage of this bill by the American Congress would be anything to the discredit of the Legislature of Porto Rico. We have the right to ask Congress for the same things that have been granted the men, I think. Men come here from Porto Rico and ask Congress for many things, and now we come here and ask you for this only one thing, which is just and humane—the right to vote.

We claim that this is something inherent in our citizenship. Have you ever thought that it is queer when we women of Porto Rico may come here to the United States and live here six months and thereafter vote for any of you Congressmen, but we have not the right to vote for anybody in Porto Rico? When it comes to living in Porto Rico we have no right of suffrage. When a woman from Porto Rico comes here and stays six months your laws seem to think she is competent to choose the lawmakers of the country, yet when she remains in Porto Rico it is said, tacitly, that we do not know how to choose our representatives, and the men must do that for us, which means govern the country. That is something that is against all reason and principles. It is something that needs to be remedied, we say. Then, it is something that only one body in the world can remedy, so it seems, and that is the Congress of the United States.

Even though the Legislature of Porto Rico should act favorably on our request for suffrage, knowing that we are fit for it, it will not be such a settled question if effected that way. It will not be such a substantial settlement as if the right were granted by the Congress of the United States. As I said a little while ago, this right to vote is something inherent to our citizenship. That citizenship was granted by Congress and now we want the Congress to complete that citizenship by giving us the power to vote.

That is why we came here to ask favorable consideration for this bill before the committee and its ultimate enactment by the Congress.

We know that the Porto Rican women shall be very happy, indeed, and gratified to the Congress of the United States if it sees fit in its wisdom to grant this requested right. It is certainly something that is worth while, and I hope you gentlemen will give it to us.
It is not only men who need your help and sympathy; it is women also.

I thank you very much for hearing me as you have. I do not believe I have anything further to say. [Applause.]

STATEMENT OF MISS ROSA EMANUELLI, SCHOOL-TEACHER, SAN JUAN, P. R.

Miss Emanueelli. I am a teacher in the public schools of Porto Rico, and I want to extend some of the arguments given by Doctor Robert.

As a teacher in the public schools, I think I know something about teachers in Porto Rico. I know that about 90 per cent of the teachers in the island, which number about 5,000, are Porto Rican women. We believe that so long as we have been intrusted with the education of children to be good American citizens we ought to have the right to vote in addition to citizenship. I think that we ought to have the right to a voice in the choosing of our representatives, who, among other things, legislate in matters affecting education. We ought to have a voice in the legislation concerning education, because we teachers know what is best as regards the maintenance and operation of schools in Porto Rico.

Women have eminently shown their qualifications as teachers in Porto Rico.

As Doctor Robert has told you, we have medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, lawyers, and other professions in which the women engage extensively. You will remember that Doctor Robert herself is director of the Maternity Hospital of San Juan, and I think that is one of the few cases in all the world.

In Porto Rico we have many women who own their own property. They pay taxes to the government, yet they are not allowed the right to select the representatives that shall collect those taxes and expend the money therefrom. It is, in fact, taxation without representation.

We think that if the women of Porto Rico are more than one-half the population of the island they should have a right to be represented in our legislature and to come to Congress and ask for an amendment to our constitution.

It is not our intention, in fact, to ask the Congress of the United States to legislate in a matter that is purely internal—in local affairs. We women of Porto Rico would never come and ask the Congress of the United States to take away from the Legislature of Porto Rico the rights now vested in it. We come here asking for more liberties and more self-government. We are here to ask for an amendment to our constitution which can not be gotten from the men in the island. It has to be gotten here from the Congress of the United States, the same as the women in the United States had to come to the Congress of the United States, after the States had failed to grant suffrage, for the vote. You granted the women of the United States an amendment to the Constitution allowing them to vote, and now we come here and ask for an amendment to the constitution of Porto Rico that would allow us to vote.

We think that this is a fundamental right and that the nineteenth amendment should have applied equally to the citizens of the United States residing in Porto Rico and to citizens of the United States residing within the United States.
We believe that by cooperating with our men we can acquire more liberties for the American citizens of Porto Rico, which is a part of this great democracy, the United States of America.

I am sure that the people of Porto Rico would be glad to hear that the Congress of the United States has at last accorded this privilege to women, because we women form more than one-half of the population of Porto Rico. The passage of this bill would cause great joy to this population and to most of the men in the island, because they are in fact favorable toward a woman suffrage.

We feel that if we should be allowed to participate in the management of the government it would be beneficial even to the men who engage in legislative work. That is especially true when it comes to legislating in regard to education and children.

We have among our numbers many mothers who know a great deal about children, and they could, therefore, legislate with reference to child welfare much better than men could.

We have many women who are unmarried and without children and a home to look after. They are alone in the world, and if they had the right of suffrage they could engage in doing something for the betterment of our country. They feel that they could be very useful in politics and in the legislative halls of our country.

Of course many of those who oppose woman suffrage are always saying that the home will be abandoned in case women are given the vote. That is not a plausible argument to employ, because the mother who has children will stay at home and take care of the children, while those who are not married will be given an opportunity to engage their talents along civic and political lines. If women were admitted to the legislature of our island I am sure it would be beneficial for the childhood, educational system, and general welfare of Porto Rico.

Many women who are married and have children go out to work while their mothers look after the children and the home. They will not abandon their home, because they have a mother to take care of the home and the children, and in addition to going out to work they could engage in these political activities looking to the uplift of our country.

In conclusion, we earnestly hope that the members of this committee may see their way clear to favorably report this bill, which would change our constitution and give us the right of suffrage. I thank you. [Applause.]

Miss Taylor. I wish to say in conclusion that it seems to me that this amendment to the organic act of Porto Rico does no violence whatever to Porto Rican affairs or Porto Rican independence, because as it stands now the legislature is made up of only one-half of the citizenship, who have a right to legislate for the other half. The right of suffrage is fundamental and should be included in the constitution. The organic act is the fundamental law of Porto Rico and the place for woman suffrage is in that fundamental law.

In other words, political rights of women should be given in the same act that gave men political rights, which was a thing the women of the United States felt when they worked for a national suffrage amendment to the Constitution.
SUFFRAGE FOR PORTO RICO

Dr. Carrie Harrison. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, Mr. Townier, the Governor of Porto Rico, is a friend of mine.

The Chairman. Is Governor Townier a friend of yours?

Doctor Harrison. Yes, sir. Some six years ago he said the women of Porto Rico would be thoroughly qualified to vote intelligently in two years. Now, you members of this committee and the Congress are four years behind in granting that right.

The Chairman. The governor has recommended woman suffrage in his last two messages.

Doctor Harrison. Yes, sir; that is true. Every man on the Hill knows that Governor Townier's word is perfectly good. Mrs. Keyes, the wife of the Senator from New Hampshire, whom everybody knows, was a guest of Governor and Mrs. Townier for many months, and she concluded that the women of Porto Rico are eminently equipped for the right of suffrage. I do not know what it takes into Porto Rico to get ready to vote, but that is good evidence, is it not, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman. Yes, madam.

The committee is perfectly willing and ready to hear from anybody who is in favor of the bill, but if nobody wishes to speak for it further we will be glad to hear from any opponents to the measure, if such there be. Nobody has spoken to me about being heard in opposition to this bill.

Mr. Hare. I would like to ask one question of the last witness heard this morning. It may be that I am hard of hearing, but I did not understand the reference you made to the number of men in the legislature who had no dependents, such as wives, mothers, or children. I am wondering whether there was a very large percentage of the members of the legislature unmarried. Do you know about that?

Miss Emanuelli. I do not know about that. I do not happen to have statistics in regard to that. We have a number of women in Porto Rico who have no houses or children to take care of. They simply stay at home, most of them. They are unmarried, and if they could be granted the right of suffrage they would have a good chance to go to the legislature and take part in other governmental affairs.

Mr. Dallinger. Do I understand you to say that a majority of the men in Porto Rico favor woman suffrage; and, if that is so, why the difficulty in getting the Legislature of Porto Rico to exercise a power it already has to give women the vote?

Miss Emanuelli. It has been stated here, the senate passed the bill granting women suffrage, but the house of representatives failed to pass it. We think it is a political convenience or something of that kind. There are some who are opposed to women suffrage, of course. However, I am glad to say that the majority of the people there are heartily in favor of it. Passing it by the senate was based upon a literacy test, and the people there would like a bill without that.

Mr. Dallinger. Do you have a literacy test for men voters?

Miss Emanuelli. No, sir.

Mr. Dallinger. There is no literacy test there for male voters?

Miss Emanuelli. No, sir.

Mr. Dallinger. A man may vote there whether he can read or write?
Miss Emanuelli. Yes, sir. They are now trying to amend that law. But if this law goes through they are going to put an educational qualification upon women, while there will be no qualification upon men voting now.

The Chairman. Will that not apply to men if the bill passes?

Miss Emanuelli. Yes; if the bill passes it will apply to men; but the men who have the right to vote now will not be disfranchised. The men who vote now and who do not know how to read and write will still have the right to vote after that law goes into effect. We will not be balanced. There will be many men who can not read and write and many men who can read and write voting.

Mr. Cooper. Is there any qualification attached to voting by men in Porto Rico?

Miss Emanuelli. No, sir.

Mr. Cooper. In this bill we have before us I notice a provision that "no property qualifications shall ever be imposed upon or required of any voter." I wanted to know whether there was a property qualification now, or are you anticipating that there might be a property qualification in the future.

Miss Emanuelli. That is part of the organic act now. In framing this bill they recited the law now and then put on a proviso: "That the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex." That quotation is the whole thing in this bill.

Mr. Brigham. Do I understand that the Legislature of Porto Rico now has the right to confer suffrage on women?

Miss Emanuelli. Yes; that is true.

Mr. Brigham. How many times has it been considered by the Legislature of Porto Rico—the question of woman suffrage?

Miss Emanuelli. In 1919 a bill was introduced, but it failed of passage.

Mr. Brigham. Has a bill looking to the granting of a franchise to women been introduced every session since 1919?

Miss Emanuelli. A bill was introduced in 1923 and another bill was introduced in 1925. In 1925 the bill was passed by the senate, but the house of representatives did not pass it.

The Chairman. Governor Towner has recommended the granting of suffrage to women in his last two messages. Do you think the fact that you will have an election in Porto Rico this year has caused a postponement of action on your bill?

Miss Emanuelli. I am sure of that. And there will be elections again in November.

The Chairman. Did the bill that passed the senate and authorized the voting of women provide for immediate voting or was the time to vote fixed for 1932?

Miss Emanuelli. The time at which the right to vote would become effective was fixed as 1932.

The Chairman. If the bill were passed in this form it would not affect the elections this year. I thought that possibly there was an election coming on, and that might have some effect upon the postponing of action on the bill.

Doctor Robert. We have an election now, and we think that has postponed action; but I am afraid if we are going to leave this thing for the next legislature that legislature will find another excuse to postpone action. They are great for procrastinating.
Mr. Williams. I came in late, and therefore the question I am about to ask may have been answered. Let me ask whether the bill to grant suffrage to women has ever passed the senate of Porto Rico?

Doctor Robert. Yes, sir; it has passed the senate, but it has never passed the house of representatives.

Mr. Cooper. Mr. Chairman, I desire to ask you a question.

The Chairman. Very well.

Mr. Cooper. Is not the nineteenth amendment broad enough to confer upon these citizens of the United States who live in Porto Rico the right to vote, regardless of sex, or is it?

The Chairman. I think not. I think that has been the ruling.

Mr. Cooper. The citizens of Porto Rico became citizens of the United States in 1917, I believe.

The Chairman. That is true.

Mr. Cooper. And, therefore, they were citizens at the time the nineteenth amendment was adopted.

The Chairman. That is true.

Mr. Cooper. I do not recall whether it confined citizenship to the continental United States or not. How about that? I thought that amendment was broad enough to make citizens of the citizens of our insular possessions, or some of them.

The Chairman. I think not. Some of our amendments have not even applied to the Philippine Islands, for instance.

Mr. Cooper. But the citizens of Porto Rico are in a different status.

The Chairman. I appreciate that.

Miss Vernon. That amendment provides that "The right of a citizen of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Mr. Cooper. That is the point I am raising. In 1917 we granted the right of citizenship to the citizens of Porto Rico, and I am just wondering whether or not the language just quoted is broad enough to cover citizens whether they live in the continental United States or not; and if they are voters already would it require different legislation than this?

The Chairman. I take it that people who are strongly in favor of this proposed measure must have investigated that, and if it did apply they would not ask for this bill we have before us.

STATEMENT OF HON. FELIX CORDOVA DAVILA, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER FROM PORTO RICO

The Chairman. We shall be glad to hear what you have to say, Mr. Davila.

Mr. Davila. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I fully agree with the sentiments expressed here in favor of woman suffrage, and yet, it seems to me, there is nothing more local to the people of Porto Rico than this very question. I am sure that when we come here to ask for full self-government for Porto Rico these generous people will come to our aid in this fight for greater liberties for the people of Porto Rico.

Regarding this bill, I want to say, personally, that I am very strongly in favor of woman suffrage. I have always been. I do not see any reason why the Porto Rican women should not enjoy the same
right that American women have to vote. I believe that the influence of the Porto Rican women would be very useful and very helpful in the political affairs of Porto Rico. That is my honest and sincere conviction.

The bill passed by the senate of Porto Rico grants the right to vote to women or men. They will have to know how to read and write, but it will apply equally to men and women.

There was opposition to the bill in Porto Rico from the Socialist Party on account of the literacy test, and I believe that is the reason this bill did not pass the house of representatives.

I want to say that, in my opinion, the Porto Rican Legislature should be left to decide questions of a local nature and not leave them for determination by the American Congress; but I want to say, further, that if there ever should be an exception to that principle, this proposition comes nearer to justifying an exception to that policy than anything I know of.

I am the official representative here of the people of Porto Rico, and I have to maintain the principle that the Porto Rican people only are entitled to handle this matter.

The people of Porto Rico do not want the Congress of the United States to legislate in matters solely within the power of the Porto Rican Legislature itself. However, repeating, I say that if any exception is to be made there is more justification for an exception in respect of this bill than in anything else. Broadly speaking, I maintain that the Congress of the United States should not legislate in purely local matters for Porto Rico. To be perfectly frank, I do not believe you are qualified to legislate in local matters in Porto Rico, and in saying that I am not belittling your intelligence. However, I do not believe you know Porto Rico as we know her. We are better qualified to legislate for our own country than you are. Therefore it seems to me that the Congress of the United States should let Porto Ricans be free to handle their own affairs.

I am very anxious to see the women of Porto Rico vote. I believe it would be a very good thing for them to vote in my country.

Of course I should like to see the privilege of voting extended to the women of Porto Rico by the Legislature of Porto Rico. That action would be more in harmony with my views, as I have told you.

At the last election in Porto Rico we had about 326,000 votes cast, and there would be about the same number of women voters if they were allowed to vote.

The status of Porto Rico is very peculiar. I want to invite the attention of gentlemen of the committee and others to a speech I made on the floor of the House of Representatives on Thursday, April 12, 1928, advocating that Porto Rico's relation to the United States should be definitely determined without further delay. That speech will give you an idea of the peculiar situation of the people of Porto Rico. I believe the members of the Committee on Insular Affairs have the duty of reading my speech. You should do it in justice to the people of Porto Rico. It will give you a full explanation of the views entertained by the good people of Porto Rico.

Mr. UNDERHILL. Please tell us how the eighteenth amendment affects Porto Rico, if at all.

Mr. Davila. The eighteenth amendment was not extended to the Island of Porto Rico, but the Volstead Act was extended to the
island and is in force there now. We have a commissioner of prohibition appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury. It has been held that the Volstead Act applied to Porto Rico.

I believe the time has come for the United States to unmistakably define the status of Porto Rico. We have been 30 years under American rule and in a peculiar situation. It is now your duty, I say, to define our status. The responsibility is yours, and you should face this problem in courage and statesmanship.

Mr. Underhill. Are you, Mr. Davila, in favor of making Porto Rico a Territory, as is Hawaii?

Mr. Davila. No, sir; I do not favor that. I believe the solution of the Porto Rican question is complete self-government, autonomy, under American jurisdiction. I explained that in my speech. I believe that statehood would not be good for Porto Rico.

I do not believe there are two members of the committee more interested in the affairs of my country than are Messrs. Underhill and Gilbert. And I should not fail to mention the interest that Mr. Dallinger also is showing in my country. I would like to say the same thing about other members of the committee, but I can not do it. I do not mean to seriously reflect on your gentlemen, and I am not blaming you for that. You have big problems, national and international, and you have to pay attention to your other duties. You have a congressional district to serve and you have no time to spare for consideration of the important and intricate problems of Porto Rico. It is unquestionable that we are more qualified than you to handle our own affairs. At all events, the right to the control of our affairs is inherently and necessarily ours.

Mr. Underhill. Is it or is it not commonly considered that Porto Rico is one of the outlying defenses of the Panama Canal?

Mr. Davila. It is considered so.

Mr. Underhill. Is not a great deal of the difficulty, then, with reference to your contention and the really tremendous interests of the United States, that the United States can not grant full suffrage or autonomy or self-government there so long as it is such an important part of our system of national defense?

Mr. Davila. I believe that self-government would not impair in any way the rights of the United States in Porto Rico.

The United States has granted American citizenship to Porto Ricans. We have accepted that citizenship without reservation. We are all loyal to the United States, and we shall remain so and serve the United States in every way possible, just as the gentleman from Massachusetts himself would do. Why should not the American people have entire confidence in us and give self-government to the people of Porto Rico, who would then control their own affairs? Is it right to deny justice to our people because we are part of the national defense? If this is justice, gentlemen, I am at a loss to understand the meaning of this word.

Mr. Underhill. You have full control now so far as legislative enactment is concerned, have you not?

Mr. Davila. Only the legislative branch is elected by the Porto Ricans, but the executive, appointed by the President has the absolute power of veto. The head of the judicial department is appointed by the President, so are the justices of the supreme court.

The decisions of our supreme court are not final, but appeals may be taken to the circuit court of Boston. Even the legislative power
is not in the hands of the Porto Ricans, as the power of veto in the executive can practically nullify the actions of the legislators.

The CHAIRMAN. Perhaps we are going into matters foreign to the subject of this hearing.

Mr. Davila. I think we should take advantage of this opportunity to discuss the affairs of Porto Rico, because the more we discuss that country the more light comes to our minds.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand that. All this is very interesting; but we have set aside this day to hear these witnesses, and I think we should hear them.

Mr. Davila. I think the gentleman should be gratified to hear these remarks about Porto Rico.

The CHAIRMAN. I am indeed gratified to hear these remarks, and I expect to hear more of them before we get through. I do not mean to cut anybody off by saying what I have.

Miss Taylor. I just wish to say in connection with this question of self-government that, according to the organic act, one-half of the citizens of Porto Rico have not self-government in a limited measure at the present time—which gives them the right to elect members of the legislature.

STATEMENT OF HON. VICTOR K. HOUSTON, DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM HAWAII

The CHAIRMAN. We are fortunate this morning in having Mr. Houston, the Delegate from Hawaii, with us, and I think he could give us some light on the question as to how suffrage has worked in Hawaii.

Mr. Houston. I should be glad to speak to you if you call me. I have no desire to inject myself into this hearing, interesting as it is.

The CHAIRMAN. We are very glad you are here. I think a few remarks by you would be beneficial to the committee. Will you not please tell us how suffrage has worked in Hawaii?

Mr. Houston. Suffrage came to Hawaii as a consequence of the suffrage amendment. Hawaii is an integral part of the United States, and we have had none but the highest results following the enactment of the amendment. We consider that the women in Hawaii are, if anything, more stable than the men. The women have taken a keen interest in politics there. They have organized, and, in some instances, organized better than the men. Of course we have in Hawaii educational facilities which afford to the women and the girls the same measure of benefit as it affords the men. Therefore there is no reason why there should be any difference.

Hawaii has been in the Union as an integral part thereof about the same time as has Porto Rico. We came in the same year Porto Rico did—in 1898. However, there is this difference: The measure of education in Hawaii has been directed and guided continuously since about 1829 by Anglo-Saxon methods and ideals, so there is no diversity as between our measure of civilization and education any more than there is on the mainland of the United States.

I believe, from experience, having been in Porto Rico and studied the island and its people, that it would be of benefit to the island of Porto Rico and its government were this bill to be adopted.
STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE C. BUTTE, FORMERLY ATTORNEY GENERAL OF PORTO RICO, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

The CHAIRMAN. We have with us this morning Mr. Butte, who was until very recently the attorney general of Porto Rico, and we would be very glad to hear from him in regard to this matter.

Mr. BUTTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, it seems to me that as a matter of principle the women of Porto Rico who are American citizens have the same right to vote as the women of the United States who are American citizens.

There is no escape, as it seems to me, from that proposition, so I am taking it that there is no debate upon the merits of the right of the women of Porto Rico to exercise suffrage.

If there should be any question as to that—and my opinion has been formed after three years' residence in Porto Rico and a very close contact with all classes of her people—I should say that, in my opinion, the women of Porto Rico are just as well qualified to exercise the right of suffrage as the men of Porto Rico are.

Mr. UNDERHILL. As an economic factor in the industry and business of Porto Rico, how do the women rank with the men—in percentages?

Mr. BUTTE. That is a difficult question to answer categorically, but, apart from positions of leadership in industry and production, my opinion is that the women of Portó Rico are just as efficient and important economic factors in their country as are the men. They are workers just like the men. We have had some litigation over the question of the legal right of Porto Ricans to vote.

The CHAIRMAN. We should very much like to know about that, Mr. Butte. The question was raised why the nineteenth amendment did not give the women of Porto Rico the right to vote.

Mr. BUTTE. That will, perhaps, remain an open question until the Supreme Court of the United States has spoken with regard to it.

The organic act of Porto Rico, passed on March 3, 1917, in section 35, prescribed that after the next election after the passage of that act citizens of the United States of 21 years or more should be qualified voters, provided that the Legislature of Porto Rico might make such additional qualifications as it deemed fit. Later on, the nineteenth amendment was adopted in the United States, and it provided that the rights of a citizen of the United States to vote shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

In 1924 two ladies in Porto Rico—Mrs. Moralis, who was a worker in a cigar factory in San Juan, and Mrs. Newton—brought mandamus suit against the board of registration of electors to compel them to register them as voters. The board refused to do it. On an appeal to the Supreme Court of Porto Rico that court held that the nineteenth amendment did not apply to Porto Rico. They were proceeding upon the broad proposition that inasmuch as Porto Rico is not a Territory, an organized Territory or an incorporated Territory of the United States, but merely a possession of the United States, the Constitution of the United States did not apply to Porto Rico, except as regards certain fundamental personal rights.

You will recall that in the case of Balzac against the People of Porto Rico (258 U.S.) the Supreme Court of the United States held
that the right of trial by jury guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States was not extended to Porto Rico, but it did say, contrary to popular assumption, that the Constitution does not follow the flag. They did say that the Constitution of the United States is in force wherever the United States exercised its sovereignty, and that included necessarily the Philippines and Porto Rico; but they qualified that broad general statement by saying that the Constitution contained certain grants of power and certain limitations which were necessarily inapplicable to the insular possessions; but that certain fundamental personal rights protected by the Constitution of the United States would also be protected under that instrument in Porto Rico.

So that in the Supreme Court of Porto Rico the question was whether or not the right of suffrage is such a fundamental personal right that it would be protected by the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Mr. DALLINGER. What is the language of the organic act of 1917?

Mr. UNDERHILL. If I may interrupt right there, is male suffrage in Porto Rico restricted with regard to property, education, or other qualifications?

Mr. DALLINGER. Section 35 of the act approved March 2, 1917, to provide a civil government for Porto Rico says, "That at the first election held pursuant to this act the qualified electors shall be those having the qualifications of voters under the present law. Thereafter voters shall be citizens of the United States 21 years of age or over and have such additional qualifications as may be prescribed by the Legislature of Porto Rico: Provided, That no property qualification shall be imposed upon or required of any voter."

Mr. BUTTE. The organic act of 1917 was adopted before the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States became effective. The question is whether the Constitution, through the nineteenth amendment, does now guarantee equal suffrage in Porto Rico.

The CHAIRMAN. Has that question been before the Supreme Court of the United States?

Mr. BUTTE. No, sir. The Porto Rican Supreme Court held that the nineteenth amendment was not applicable.

Mr. DALLINGER. The act of March 2, 1917, provides that voters shall be citizens of the United States 21 years of age or over and have such additional qualifications as may be prescribed by the Legislature of Porto Rico. It mentions “citizens of the United States” and does not say anything about males.

Mr. BUTTE. They undertook to make additional qualifications by saying that males only shall exercise that right.

Mr. DALLINGER. That was after that.

Mr. BUTTE. Yes; it was the law prior to that time and it was continued. The same question was raised in the Supreme Court of Porto Rico.

Mr. DALLINGER. Why has not this matter been brought to the Supreme Court of the United States for final adjudication?

Mr. BUTTE. Nothing, except that the question became moot after 1924. In the case of those two ladies who applied for a writ of mandamus before the election of 1924 to compel the election officials
to register them, on account of the delay incident to the decision, the case was not decided until after the election had been held. If the matter could have been advanced to the point where a decision could have been rendered before election time it would have been decided.

I suppose you all know the history of the efforts of the women of Porto Rico to obtain relief in this matter from the Legislature of Porto Rico. I will concede that you know such and I will not go into that question.

The CHAIRMAN. A bill passed the senate of Porto Rico this year giving the women restricted suffrage.

Mr. BUTTE. Yes, sir; it granted women the right to vote, subject to the literacy test, which was not applicable to men. However, as has been said here, that bill did not pass the house of representatives. It died or was killed.

Mr. DAVILA. That bill would give the same right to men and women after 1932. However, it would retain to those who can now vote the right to vote in the future.

Mr. BUTTE. Yes; that is true; the men who have been exercising the right to vote would not be subject to the literacy test after 1932.

Mr. UNDERHILL. Have you any figures to show the percentage of qualified voters and those who are registered?

Mr. BUTTE. Qualified in what sense?

Mr. UNDERHILL. Those who are allowed to vote. How many men are registered?

Mr. BUTTE. I think there are 300,000. That is my recollection. I can get you the exact number, I believe.

Mr. UNDERHILL. But you do not know the percentages?

Mr. BUTTE. No, sir.

I really feel that the women of Porto Rico, having made such long efforts to get the ballot from their own people, and having failed, owing to local conditions, have a right to come before the Congress of the United States and petition for that amendment of the organic act, if an amendment is really necessary.

In explanation of the attitude of the men of Porto Rico who have heretofore had the power to decide this question in their hands, you will have to understand that in Porto Rico we have a distinct civilization with 400 years of tradition behind it of the Latin race. They have not taken so enthusiastically to the equal suffrage as we have in the northern countries. It is interesting and even astonishing to think that what they are pleased to call the mother country has itself granted woman suffrage.

Mr. DALLINGER. What is the situation with regard to woman suffrage in other Latin-American countries, if you know?

Mr. BUTTE. I do not think that any of the Latin-American countries have woman suffrage, unless it is Brazil.

Mr. UNDERHILL. What have you to say about the opposition that inevitably comes up when matters are before us concerning legislating for Porto Rico? Porto Rico has a legislature. It is not ethical for the Congress of the United States to override the will of a majority of the duly elected representatives in the Porto Rican Legislature. We are constantly up against that in all legislation that comes before this committee.

Mr. BUTTE. Of course that is largely a question of legislative discretion on the part of Congress. Congress has repeatedly exercised
that power regardless of any objection on the part of the people of Porto Rico, believing it was exercising that power in their interests solely. In the second place, whatever authority Congress may have vested in the Legislature of Porto Rico, there is no question but that under existing state of matters the ultimate responsibility for conditions in Porto Rico rests with the Congress of the United States.

Mr. DALLINGER. Do you not think that the granting of suffrage to women in Porto Rico would improve the electorate there rather than deteriorate it?

Mr. BUTTE. I do not believe it would make any difference at all. It would have the same effect as it has in the United States, I believe.

Mr. DALLINGER. The granting of woman suffrage in the United States has not deteriorated the electorate here, has it?

Mr. BUTTE. No, sir; I do not think it has. There is one practical proposition that should be kept in mind, and that is that these women are citizens of the United States. They were made such by the Congress of the United States. They have a fundamental personal right, I would say, to exercise the suffrage, particularly in view of the adoption of the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

It is an analogous situation when the women of Porto Rico may come here, remain six months, and then vote, and yet they can not vote in their own country.

Doctor HARRISON. It is a matter of justice, and it is nobody's business whether the women of Porto Rico improve Porto Rico or not. Porto Rico is theirs and they can do as they deem best with it.

Mr. BUTTE. It seems to me that they have a just right to a voice in the control of their home affairs to the same extent that the women of the United States have been granted that right.

Doctor HARRISON. It is not a fundamental principle of republics to have anybody disfranchised, is it?

Mr. BUTTE. The nineteenth amendment speaks in very clear terms on that. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Does anybody here desire to speak further in support of this bill? [After a pause.] Apparently not. I understand that at least two ladies desire to be heard in opposition to it. If there is nothing further to be submitted by the proponents of the measure, will you please, lady, give your name and address to the stenographer?

STATEMENT OF MRS. RUFUS M. GIBBS, SECRETARY CONSTITUTIONAL LEAGUE OF MARYLAND, 1209 ST. PAUL STREET, BALTIMORE, MD.

MRS. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee I represent the Women's Constitutional League of Maryland. I was also the president of the Antisuffrage Association of Maryland, and I can say that, like all my antisuffrage sisters, I think we are trying to do our full duty. I am now one of the directors of the woman's section of the Eleventh Ward Democratic Club and also chairman of the legislative section of the Federation of Democratic Women.

One part of our constitution provides that the members of our league shall oppose "all measures tending to centralize power in the Federal Government which is now exercised or can be exercised by the several States or their city, town, or county governments."
We oppose any exercise of power by the Federal Government or any centralized power in the smaller localities which are competent to look after their own affairs. We feel that there is no more vital principle incorporated in our Government than the power of local self-government. I might also say that as president of the Maryland Antisuffrage Association I worked for the principles that I have thus far enunciated here. I took that position only when there came to be a question of coercion from a central government, because we felt that it was entirely a State matter, and I was not alone as an anti-suffragist in thinking that. I had gone on record as saying that I would not oppose it.

We found in various groups of suffrage women that they took the same stand we did.

Dr. Anna Shaw, who belonged to a different suffrage group, once told me that, in her opinion, woman suffrage should not come into being through a Federal amendment to the Constitution. She said that it should come into being through the action of smaller units of our Government.

It seems to me that there is nothing more important than allowing a local self-government to have full sway, and that is particularly true when we are dealing with a dependency. I can not imagine anything that would more embitter people than to have coercion and domination from meddlesome Matties who want to interfere with what they feel is best for their own locality and country.

The sweeping statement is made that the women of America and of Porto Rico are very, very anxious for suffrage. I do not find that they regard the matter of franchise as a right. They regard it more as a duty, and a great many of them are reluctant to assume that duty. They do not care about voting.

As one of the directors of the woman's section of the Eleventh Ward Democratic Club, and as chairman of the legislative section of the Federation of Democratic Women, I have done my utmost to get the women to recognize their political responsibility, but I find they seem to feel it is an added duty that they do not want to assume, and they are in consequence feeling embittered over the fact that they have had something forced upon them which they did not want.

In our State we had a census that showed the attitude of 32,000 women. That census was carefully taken, and out of that group 29,000 did not want to vote, 2,000 wanted to vote, and 1,000 were indifferent in regard to the matter.

Now, when these ladies, whose special business seems to be going around the world as itinerant reformers to free their sisters and who have come into my State and annoyed us a great deal, find out how many women really want to be free, it seems to me the question the gentleman asked about the men in the legislature would suggest that the ladies seem to point out that they have no mothers, sisters, or wives. Why are they unwilling to give women the vote there? Perhaps they find the women among them do not care about the vote.

Yet the Congress is asked to free all these women who do not want to be freed.

Referring to the added expense that voting by women would cause, I would say that it would double the cost of holding every election. It costs, as we all know, thousands of dollars to put the machinery of government in motion for women to vote, even though they do not avail themselves of that privilege.
As has been shown by statistics in the United States where the women have the unrestricted right to vote, we find that not a very great many exercise that right. I rather think that if these people would check up on some of these Porto Rican women they would find that the women of Porto Rico have confidence in their sons, their fathers, and their brothers, and those members of the legislature who can look out for their interests without having any of these advanced feminists, whose attitude is that when the constitution stands in your way you can scrap the constitution, and whose motto is: "Men have made the laws long enough. Let women make the laws and let men make the beds."

I can not imagine anything that would be worse for the future of this country and for Porto Rico than for Congress to go out of its way and interfere in something, I am sure, the local people, here and in Porto Rico, feel that they are quite qualified to take care of themselves.

The women of Porto Rico have every opportunity to gain suffrage. When the women of Porto Rico can persuade the men of Porto Rico that they should have the vote they can have the opportunity to persuade them.

It seems to me that just to say that this act of 1917 went into effect before woman suffrage was granted in the United States, and therefore the women of Porto Rico must assert themselves, is playing the rôle of a poor sport. That is saying: "You have your legislature and you can do as you please, but we will interfere in this matter."

All history tells us about the seriousness of the undue exercise of power by a central government. Take the age-long struggle that took place between Ireland and England. Perhaps England had a better way of doing things than the Irish had worked out, and the Irish should have been happy to let them continue to run things, but it did not turn out that way. Wherever local self-government can be properly maintained it should be maintained, and this Congress should be the first body to uphold the hand that maintains that local self-government. Such is incorporated in the basic laws of our country and was put there by the founders of this great Nation, and I can not understand how one gentleman on this committee could truthfully feel and honestly feel that it was good to go to Porto Rico and do something that the legislature there has not seen fit to do itself.

Mr. UNDERHILL. I am in entire accord and sympathy with the statement you have made; but the States of Massachusetts and Maryland have had this thing forced upon them. The principles mentioned by you have been violated so universally that the only question which remains for us to decide is whether it shall be still further violated or extended to a certain group of citizens who do not now have it. I do not think it would do them the least bit of good. I do not think that woman suffrage has done our country any good. I think it was a financial, social, and moral mistake. The facts stare us in the face that all the remainder of the citizens of the country now come under that provision, except these few in Porto Rico; and whether it is a further extension of evil, is it not at least consistent that we should take the attitude toward them that we have taken toward the remainder of our people?

Mrs. Gibbs. Two wrongs do not make a right.

The former attorney general of Porto Rico just said that the Porto Ricans have 400 years of Latin traditions behind them and those traditions are different from ours. It seems to me that we are out
of sympathy with those traditions; and certainly they are less inclined to recognize woman's so-called right, which means woman's added duties, if they are reluctant to grant them the right of suffrage. I think they should be allowed to work out such methods as they themselves may determine upon. A strong nation that forces something upon a weaker nation is not gaining anything.

The Chairman. This agitation, let me remind you, comes from the women of Porto Rico themselves. It is not fair to blame this agitation upon the women of the United States. Personally, the people who have been to see me and who have written me and talked to me in Porto Rico are the women of Porto Rico. There are organs down in Porto Rico which represent the women of that country and they are asking for this particular legislation.

Mrs. Gibbs. We have seen those same elements at work here in the United States. It is much like the man who thought there were a thousand frogs in a pond when there was so much noise, but upon careful investigation it was found that there was only one frog making a lot of noise. Some of these most noisy people are not in the majority. That is usual, we all know.

In conclusion let me suggest that if this committee should get in touch with the Legislature of Porto Rico, which has refused to grant this demand for woman suffrage, they would learn many enlightening facts.

STATEMENT OF MISS MARY G. KILBRETH, PRESIDENT OF THE WOMAN'S PATRIOTIC PUBLISHING CO., NO. 8 JACKSON PLACE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Miss Kilbreth. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I am speaking in behalf of the Woman's Patriot Publishing Co., No. 8 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C.

The board of directors, which controls our policy, is unanimously opposed to the pending measure.

I would like to leave out of this discussion entirely the question of expediency of woman suffrage. What interests me most is that I consider this bill involves the whole question of Latin-American relations and policies of the United States in regard to its dependencies.

We gave the island of Porto Rico an organic act and in it we were explicit on the subject of suffrage. To override that act is to make a scrap of paper of that organic act. It is, we maintain, an act of bad faith on the part of the United States.

The Chairman. We have amended that act in many ways, and you would not say, I take it, that such amendments were acts of bad faith. We have amended it even at the request of Porto Ricans in many cases.

Miss Kilbreth. This is in absolute violation of all that we know of the will of Porto Rico on this subject. I will come to that in a minute.

This organic act is about such a document as the American colonies received from Great Britain. It is like their charters. The English Parliament let us alone on purely internal matters. When it interfered in the internal government of the colonies it was for practical advantages for the English people, not following the bullying or whim of a little particular group.
I think that for this powerful Nation to undertake to override a little island like Porto Rico on a most intimate matter of internal government, which suffrage is, and of which we have already given them control, will have a repercussion throughout Latin America and seriously affect Latin-American relations.

I have said that Porto Rico does not want woman suffrage. All I know about the Porto Rican suffrage situation has been taken from statements made by proponents of the pending measure.

Equal Rights is the official organ of the National Woman's Party, and in the April 30, 1927, edition of that organ it published a letter from Dr. Marta Roberts, secretary, writing on behalf of the Woman Suffrage League of Porto Rico to the National Woman's Party, that is handling this agitation, which said:

* * * Since 1917 * * * we have been going to the legislature with our petition; every time our legislature was going to open session we visited the governor to ask him to recommend in his message woman suffrage; but we never did obtain of late governors any recommendation in this line. But this time Governor Towner did something in favor of our cause, asking the legislature to consider the necessity of woman suffrage. We do really think that the National Woman's Party has brought great pressure for this recommendation. * * *

That extract is taken from the official organ of the National Women's Party. As regards Governor Towner, note the significance of the apparent fact that he evidently was reluctant to recommend that measure to the Legislature of Porto Rico.

Governor Towner when he was here was an ardent advocate of woman suffrage, and he was, it will be recalled, the chief sponsor of the maternity bill. Moreover, he was the chief original sponsor of the education bill, which is being bitterly opposed. He sponsored the maternity bill and the education bill, and he was, when in Congress, an ardent supporter of feminist legislation. The fact that he hesitated about making the recommendation he did to the Legislature of Porto Rico would seem to indicate that there was a great deal of local opposition to it.

Two weeks later, on May 18, 1927, the secretary of the Porto Rican Women's League wrote to the same National Women's Party member who is engineering this Porto Rican agitation, as follows:

We have done all we could with our legislators to obtain legislation granting suffrage for Porto Rican women, but we obtained nothing. (Equal Rights, June 11, 1927, p. 139.)

I am going to leave with the committee this [indicating] copy of the June 11, 1927, copy of Equal Rights.

That is an organ of the National Women's Party. It is a report of their delegation's interview with Doctor Barcelo.

On October 12 the Porto Rican Suffrage League appealed to President Coolidge, and after describing the status of the suffrage bill in the Porto Rican Legislature, the letter states:

This has demonstrated to us that they (the legislators) had no intention of giving it. (Equal Rights, Dec. 24, 1927.)

Mr. Barcelo, president of the Porto Rican Senate and Mr. Soto, speaker of the house, were in Washington last June. The National Woman's Party sent a delegation to confer with them. It is said that "Mrs. Matthews informed the commission from Porto Rico that if the Legislature of Porto Rico did not give the vote to the women on
the same terms as men, the National Woman's Party would undertake to secure it for them by act of Congress.

Mr. Barcelo replied that he would greatly regret such action, as he himself held the extension of the franchise is a matter for Porto Rico itself to determine. (Equal Rights, June 11, 1927.)

Mr. Barcelo maintained his attitude of opposition to interference by Congress with the qualifications for suffrage in Porto Rico and declared that Porto Rican women trusted their legislature and would be unwilling to have Congress enfranchise them.

Consequently, I consider that the Congress of the United States is being asked to override the will of the people of Porto Rico. For what? And for what are you going to jeopardize our Latin-American relations? Is it for any solid advantage to the United States that exigencies of statecraft might seek to justify? Nothing of the kind, I say. Nobody but the National Woman's Party is asking for the enactment of this bill. It is merely to satisfy the obsession of a group of sex fanatics and internationalists—the minority left wing of the feminist bloc—and to carry out their policies.

Mr. Hooper. If I may interrupt right now—

Miss Kilbreth. Certainly, I should be glad to have gentlemen of the committee ask any questions that may suggest themselves.

Mr. Hooper. I have been very much interested in what you have said this morning. I personally am not wholly interested in the National Woman's Party—what they do or say; but the thing that occurs to me with reference to this particular matter is this: Suppose the women of Porto Rico were denied the writ of habeas corpus and the men there had it. Suppose that all the people of the United States were entitled to the benefits conferred by the writ of habeas corpus. Would it not seem the exercise of injustice to deny the application of the writ of habeas corpus to the women of Porto Rico if the men in Porto Rico and the men and women throughout the whole United States were accorded its benefits?

Miss Kilbreth. I am sorry, Mr. Congressman, but I am not a lawyer and can not therefore speak about that.

Mr. Hooper. I want to repeat that you have made a very fine presentation of your case.

Miss Kilbreth. I have always been under the impression that the writ of habeas corpus was more extensively used among Anglo-Saxons. These people are of a different culture from ours. Their's is a Latin civilization, and consequently I think this system of trying to club them into accepting something they do not want, as is shown by the opposition to it in Porto Rico, is not something that will work for our ultimate good. I was surprised to hear that Chile and Brazil, Latin-American countries, have woman suffrage. I did not know that. I did not know that any Latin-American country had woman suffrage.

Mr. Hooper. Whatever may be one's opinion, woman suffrage has become an accomplished fact in the United States, and the people of Porto Rico are citizens of the United States under the act of 1917. The question is whether it is right to deprive the women of Porto Rico of suffrage if they seriously ask for it.

Miss Kilbreth. Doctor Barcelo's statement, quoted in the copy of Equal Rights, filed with the committee shows that the Porto Ricans themselves cherish control of their prerogative to determine the qualifications of their electors.
Mr. Hooper. Do you mean the men?

Miss Kilbreth. Of course. The United States Congress is still male because woman suffrage in the United States has not changed the sex composition of Congress. So the Porto Rican women in coming here and appealing to Congress are appealing to American men. Do you mean to imply that American men are more solicitous about the welfare of Porto Rican women than the men of Porto Rico are? Are you more solicitous for them than their own men are—their brothers and fathers and husbands?

Mr. Hooper. No; I do not imply that in the least. Moreover, I think that is quite beyond the question. The question is whether we, as representatives of the people of the United States and its possessions, ought to be solicitous to see that the rights of all people are given them in full measure in every part of the United States.

Miss Kilbreth. I did not not want to bring in the woman-suffrage issue. Your question rather forces me to say that I do not know whether you know the nineteenth amendment was resorted to because gaining woman suffrage in the States by vote at the polls was admitted by suffrage leaders to be hopeless. When woman suffrage was imposed by the nineteenth amendment only 15 States had accepted woman suffrage and the other 33 States had either rejected it or refused even to consider it.

After these four great defeats of woman suffrage at the polls in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts in 1915, this same group of women said, “On to Washington.” Their official organ, then called the Suffragist, hoped editorially that no more such campaigns would be undertaken, adding, “It is rather a pity for suffragists to spend their time and money in getting a count of votes against themselves.” Can there be a more categorical admission that the States did not want woman suffrage?

Mr. Hooper. But the nineteenth amendment must be drawn into the question. That cannot be escaped.

Miss Kilbreth. I did not suppose you wanted to go into that matter.

Referring to Federal amendments and much other Federal legislation, they are, in my opinion, for the very purpose of overriding the will of the people. The people in the individual States, having rejected a measure, that measure is forced on them by an amendment to the Federal Constitution. The National Woman’s Party admits this. They have said it in substance over and over again. They have said in regard to their pending equal rights amendment: “There could be no more powerful argument for turning to the national equal-rights amendment than in a survey of equal-rights legislation that failed of passage during the past year,” thus admitting they had been defeated in the States.

The child-labor amendment is an example of Congress trying to impose laws against the will of the people. I would like the members of the committee from Massachusetts to remember their State’s protest on that. That amendment was put through Congress as a woman’s measure. It was swathed in sentiment. What did the people do to the twentieth amendment? As soon as Massachusetts had her campaign of information before the people it collapsed. The States now stand 37 to 5 on that amendment. Yet you were told that the women of the United States wanted the child-labor law and
feminists had exercised the pressure of their suffrage power on Congressmen to get them to pass it.

There is no reason to suppose the National Woman’s Party particularly loves Porto Rican women. They are simply using them. The Porto Rican women afford them an opportunity to apply their avowed and declared policy of going to any country where any measure concerning women is under consideration.

Let me digress for just a moment to say that these women of the National Woman’s Party are absolutely nonpartisan. They are the sex party, pure and simple, with no interest in either the Republicans or the Democrats.

Going back to the activities of these women, Miss Paul, founder and leader of the party, was in jail in England before the war for depredations during the suffrage militant campaign in England, trying to liberate her oppressed British sisters. Members of the party have been recently again in England, marching and speech making, and once more helping their oppressed sisters. They were also recently agitating in France to liberate their French sisters from their men oppressors.

Foreign feminists reciprocated and came to the United States to agitate for woman suffrage. Among them are Mrs. Pankhurst, Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Snowden, and, last and most important, Mrs. Frau Rosika Schwimmer, who worked on the side as a German “peace” agent, and has been recently denied United States citizenship.

The backers of this measure are out-and-out international agitators. They have international requirements in their constitution. They seek not only mandatory, mathematical equality by Federal compulsion throughout the United States, but also “in any international government that may be established” (see Art. II, Woman’s Party Constitution) “irrespective of the interests of any national political party” (see Art. III, Woman’s Party Constitution).

Thus the party is not Republican, nor Democratic, nor even American in its principles and object.

In 1925 the party stated officially in an editorial in its own organ as follows:

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

A casual reading of the foreign press indicates that the world is ready for an international feminist organization. the time is ripe for the formation of an international feminist union. In point of fact the feminist movement would fail in its most vital purpose were it not to become in its scope international. it is essential that the common bond of sisterhood should transcend nationalistic issues. (Equal Rights, May 9, 1925, p. 100.)

Eight distinguished women have formed what is bound to become a world-wide equal-rights committee. “An international feminist lobby” an American correspondent has called this proposed committee, and such in a sense it will be.

Mrs. Belmont is now in Paris working actively upon the plans for establishing a closer relationship among feminists the world over.

Our Nation will undoubtedly go further and further in international action. We must be ready. (Ibid. p. 101.)

Women have taken especial interest in the international labor office. There as citizens of the world women are working to achieve better labor conditions throughout the world. (See “Hands across the sea,” ibid. p. 109.)

By standing together nationally we can accomplish more than in our own States by separate action. By standing together internationally we can accomplish still more. (Equal Rights, Sept. 14, 1923.)
Thus the Woman's Party is an "international feminist union," with no more claim to speak for the women of America than the communist or socialist internationals have to speak for American labor.

Everything with them is of world scope, on a world scale. They are expressly organized along these lines.

They have an international council of 50 members representing some 25 countries and a committee for international action.

Mrs. Doris Stephens, chairman of the National Woman's Party international action committee, on her return from fomenting agitation in Habana, where she and other National Woman's Party leaders had gone to liberate sisters of all the Latin-American Republics at one stroke by inserting a clause in the Pan-American treaty, said in New York, May 22:

If men seek to abolish wrong in concert, so must women. More and more we shall see the acts of mankind defined and determined globally. We must be citizens of the world together. No one shall fetter us or bind us to a tiny stake. Our homestead is the world.

That quotation is taken from Equal Rights of March 31, 1928. Is not that a complete statement of international communism?

Sooner or later the National Woman's Party agitators will run foul of the Logan Act (section 5 of the Criminal Code, "Correspondence with foreign governments") and be fined not more than $5,000 or be imprisoned for not more than three years. The only country where woman's position satisfies the National Woman's Party is Soviet Russia. The National Woman's Party leaders who participated in the 10-year celebration of the communist declaration of Russia on November 6, reported:

It is painful to patriotic American women to recognize how far their country lags behind Soviet Russia in its treatment of women.

That is taken from the January 21, 1928, copy of Equal Rights.

These quotations show what a disturbing factor a sex party is when organized along such lines.

In considering this bill and this movement, which is due to the National Woman's Party, I do not think you can overlook its international policy and the fact that it is not especially Porto Rican women that these people are concerned with. It is simply a carrying out of an announced and practiced international policy.

The CHAIRMAN. Inasmuch as it is past 12 o'clock, the committee will adjourn.

(Thereupon, at 12.25 o'clock p. m., Monday, April 30, 1928, the committee adjourned, to meet at the call of the chairman.)

BALTIMORE, MD., May 2, 1928.

CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE ON INSULAR POSSESSIONS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEAR SIR: I am writing as chairman of the executive committee of the Sentinels of the Republic, to register my opposition to the bill known as the Kiess-Bingham bill, to impose woman suffrage on the people of Porto Rico without their consent.

It is true that the island of Porto Rico has practically no constitutional rights that Congress can not take away from it. This fact is a reason why Congress should feel a greater moral restraint against committing an act of injustice to this dependent population which has practically no voice and certainly no vote in Congress to protect itself.
The cause of the American Revolution was the indignation of the colonists against the proposal of Parliament to legislate for them without their consent. The situation of Porto Rico is exactly the same, except that its people are alien in blood and traditions, and it is therefore even more unwise as well as unjust to attempt to force laws upon them that they do not want.

I do not believe that woman suffrage has been introduced in any Latin country either in Europe or America. Certainly it is not favored in a great majority of those countries. Porto Rico is a Latin country, and the attempt to impose upon it a law of this kind will be resented throughout Latin America.

The Porto Rico Legislature, freely elected by its citizens, has full authority under the organic act of 1917 to adopt woman suffrage if and when it pleases. If woman suffragists in this country think that this ought to be extended to Porto Rico it is their privilege to start their propaganda in that island and convince its people. There is no moral defense for their position in asking Congress to force it upon them.

While the Sentinels of the Republic are primarily interested in maintaining the liberties of our own States and people, especially against Federal usurpation and bureaucratic tyranny, they feel ashamed that American citizens appear before Congress to advocate the denial of those liberties which our country has in the past freely conceded to the population of this dependent community.

Very respectfully,

THOS. F. CADWALADER,
Chairman Executive Committee, Sentinels of the Republic.