

Extension of Remarks of Dr. Arturo Morales-Carrión,
Commonwealth Under Secretary of State

The idea that Puerto Rico might become a federated state of the Union is not attractive to responsible Latin American opinion, to judge from the statements made, not by enemies of the United States, but by writers or newspapers known as staunch supporters of American policies.

One of these Latin American newspapers is El Tiempo, of Bogotá, Colombia, an outstanding liberal newspaper of Latin America and highly regarded in U. S. journalistic circles. El Tiempo recently said in an editorial, quoted by the Spanish ^{newspaper} La Prensa of New York on August 7, 1959, that the idea of federal statehood for Puerto Rico would be respectable if the people so wished but would not evoke enthusiasm in Latin America as it would mean "the absorption of part of our Latin tradition, without need or justification."

"Puerto Rico" --El Tiempo added--"has a traditional personality, which can be preserved better, with greater dignity and decorum, in its Commonwealth status as an associated free state than as an integrated part of the United States."

Roberto García-Peña, a distinguished Latin American journalist and a recipient of the 'Maria Moors Cabot Award,' given by Columbia University, wrote an article, published in El Mundo of San Juan, June 13, 1959, in which he stated:

"The possibility that Puerto Rico might become a State of the North American Union is sometimes discussed. Such a step would be a serious error, certainly. The present status of Puerto Rico, defined as an associated free state, gives the island every possible advantage, while maintaining it in a

condition of relative independence which is well suited to its economy and its way of life. Latin America would not view statehood for Puerto Rico with satisfaction, since such a change in status would mean a drastic break with the Iberian tradition of the Puerto Rican people whom we Latin Americans consider as one of ourselves since they represent a prolongation of our tradition and even of our history. "

"Furthermore, we do not believe that legislation on statehood for Puerto Rico would prosper; nor do we believe that the United States is greatly interested in changing Puerto Rico's present status which reflects honor on the United States for its having done away with every vestige of colonialism, and serves as a hemispheric bond, affording an inter-American meeting place, one more link in forging the good neighbor relationship which, though greatly deteriorated, is, for all of us, North and South, so necessary. "

The noted Chilean specialist in economic affairs, Rubén Corvalán, after returning from a visit to the United States and Puerto Rico, wrote in La Nación, of Santiago, Chile, June 12, 1959, as follows:

"Puerto Rico, as an independent Latin American republic, could only offer to the islanders freedom and poverty. Unfortunately! It would be ruined as a State of the Union, subject, then, to the overwhelming burden of federal taxes, and incapable of providing the incentives necessary for its industrial development. Puerto Rico could not then compete in the American market in view of the additional costs arising from the substantial imposition of federal taxes. We hold, therefore, the opinion that Puerto Rico, at this crossroads, would again insist in its determination to live as a Commonwealth, voluntarily associated with the United States. "

In an article entitled "Puerto Rico Joins the Union Without Losing Its Own Characteristics," published April 16, 1958, in the well-known newspaper of Buenos Aires, La Nación, the noted Argentine writer, Juan S. Valmaggia, associate director of the newspaper, after carefully examining the different political trends in Puerto Rico came to this conclusion:

"[The solution is] In brief, neither an independent Puerto Rico nor a Puerto Rico incorporated into the Union as another State with the re-

sulting impoverishing of its cultural entity; but a Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as provided by the Charter of 1952, with the improvements in the system that time will allow, in order to emphasize the autonomous characteristics that were borne in mind when the Commonwealth was created."