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Puerto Ricans Say 'Si'

PUERTO RICANS have overwhelmingly adopted a new constitution establishing the commonwealth of Puerto Rico "within our union with the United States."

Their action set up a new political device in the American system—a commonwealth or self-governing demistate, as a substitute for full statehood.

In the second place, it was a tremendous personal victory for Gov. Luis Munoz Marin, the first native ever to head the Puerto Rican government since the island was liberated by the United States.

Thirdly, it inflicted a crushing defeat on the rabid, violent but numerically insignificant Nationalista party headed by the terrorist Albizu Campos. Members of that party attempted to assassinate President Truman Nov. 1, 1950.

As a commonwealth, the country will stand largely in the same relation to our federal union as do Britain's self-governing dominions. It will be an interesting innovation to watch. Under a proposal by Senator Monroney of Oklahoma, Hawaii and Alaska would be offered similar status,

The new deal for Puerto Rico will not be effective until congress approves it. A number of senators have been demanding investigation of charges that Governor Marin has become a dictator and a wastrel with American money. There is certain to be some airing of those charges during discussion of the new constitution, but it will be stoutly countered by men like Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming who was largely responsible for selling the commonwealth idea to leading Puerto Ricans, and who believes Marin is not only a vigorous but an effective administrator.

The almost complete political independence now in sight for the island's people will have to be supported for some time to come by the American taxpayer, as in the past, but the incentive of self-rule should be a long forward step towards self-support.