

H. J. RES. 144.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JULY 10, 1919.

Mr. DYER introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Insular Affairs and ordered to be printed.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Providing for an advisory referendum by the people of Porto Rico as to the form of government they desire.

Whereas governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right does or should exist to hand peoples about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were property; and

Whereas the right to govern the people of Porto Rico was acquired by the United States in the War with Spain, and without their consent; and

Whereas the commanding officer of the United States Army, on taking possession of Porto Rico on the 25th of July, 1899, in the name of the United States, declared that the United States forces came to Porto Rico "bearing the banner of freedom, inspired by a noble purpose, and so forth"; and

Whereas the American people, through their Congress, have repeatedly declared that they would not take territory as a result of the War with Spain; and

Whereas the people of Porto Rico have rendered every possible assistance to the United States in its War with Germany by contributing 15,122 men, the purchase of Liberty bonds to the amount of \$10,093,100, and so forth; and

Whereas during the twenty years that the United States has occupied Porto Rico it has been practically “a people without a country,” and the Congress of the United States has failed to enact laws to make Porto Rico a part of the United States so as to give to the Porto Rican people the full rights of American citizenship, as decided by the Supreme Court of the United States in January, 1918; and

Whereas the people of Porto Rico by reason of their being located far away from the United States, as well as their different language, customs, and so forth, can not be governed justly and fairly by the United States with officials sent from the United States; and

Whereas the people of Porto Rico are able from every standpoint to govern themselves better than the United States or any other Government can do: Therefore be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
 2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
 3 That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized and directed
 4 to submit the following questions to an advisory referendum
 5 vote of the people residing in Porto Rico, namely:

6 (a) Do you desire that the Congress of the United
 7 States grant to the people of Porto Rico its independence?

8 (b) Do you desire that the Congress of the United
 9 States grant to the people of Porto Rico a territorial form of
 10 government?

1 (c) Do you desire that the Congress of the United
2 States continue in Porto Rico its present form of government
3 as provided in the Act of March 2, 1917?

4 *Resolved further*, That the Secretary of War is hereby
5 authorized and directed to hold an election by the people of
6 Porto Rico as soon as practicable to ascertain their wishes
7 in this respect, and to report the result to the Congress.

8 *Resolved further*, That there is hereby appropriated
9 out of the Treasury, out of moneys not otherwise appro-
10 priated, the sum of \$50,000, or so much thereof as may be
11 necessary, for the expenses of this referendum.

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