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Cuban Affairs.

SPEECH

OF

HON. JOSEPH B. FORAKER,

OF OHIO,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

Wednesday, April 20, 1898.

CUBAN AFFAIRS.

Mr. FORAKER. Will the Senator from Colorado allow me to interrupt him a moment?

Mr. TELLER. Certainly.

Mr. FORAKER. I do not want to engage in this debate, but in view of the fact that I insisted as earnestly as I could upon the recognition of the Republic of Cuba, I wish to call attention in this connection to what was said in the Senate on the 28th of February, 1896, by the present Secretary of State, Mr. Sherman, who was then a Senator from Ohio. He said:

The objection has been made, not in debate here, but in the public press, that the Cubans have no organized government; that they have no local habitation and name; that they have no legislative powers; that there is nobody elected to make laws. That is absolutely untrue. Here in this little pamphlet—

Which I see, by referring to a previous part of his speech, was something that had been published in relation to the conditions in Cuba—

are the proceedings of the government of Cuba and of the people of Cuba in organizing the government. Here is a statement of the growth of the revolution, of the battles and campaigns, and contemporaneous with these movements the preliminary organization of local self-government as constituted.

Sir, much to my surprise, because I took up the general idea that those people, in the first instance, were merely a band of discontents, having no organization, with whom we could not deal, it is shown by this official document, communicated to the Secretary of State, that they have gone through all the formulæ of self-government as fully and completely as the people of the United States did at the beginning of the Revolution.

This little document shows the organization of the legislature, the military organization, the election of a president, M. Cisneros, a man of high character, of conceded ability, a man of property and standing, who also, I believe, took a prominent active part in the revolution of 1868 to 1878, besides being eminent in civil life.

Here are rules for the regulation of the army. Here are stipulations made as to the treatment of prisoners, how they shall be dealt with, and it is a remarkable fact that in all the battles fought by these wandering "robbers and bandits," as they have been called, whenever they captured a soldier of the Spanish army they released him and allowed him to return to his command. This humane and generous treatment is far different from the universal custom of the Spanish troops when one of the rebels is taken. He is sent to a prison in Africa by the Spanish troops or is treated harshly and in some cases

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injured. These are poor men; the army is composed of native Cubans and men some of whom have been freed from slavery, black people, but they have shown no signs of being guilty of the barbarous atrocity of which I shall have to speak hereafter, I am afraid injudiciously.

That is as far as I care to read. The part to which I wanted to call attention, particularly, was the statement made by Mr. Sherman two years ago in the Senate that he had been surprised, as I was surprised, when he came to investigate, to find that they had a government thoroughly organized and in successful operation. If that was true two years ago, and unquestionably it was, and if it be true, as it unquestionably is, that from that day until this that government, with its army, has withstood the combined assaults of Spain upon it, it is a government which we have a right to recognize according to all the principles of international law, for it is not only standing as it then stood in defiance of the power of Spain, but now it can be said, as it was not said and could not be said then, that Spain has ceased to be attended in her efforts to conquer those people with any reasonable hope or expectation of success. That is said; it is said by the President of the United States in the message which he sent us.

It was because two years ago the truth was, as Mr. Sherman stated it in the speech from which I have read, and because from that day until this that truth has been made more and more strong, that I felt in dealing with this question at this time we had a right to recognize that government, and that it was our duty to recognize that government. I think it was unfortunate that we did not recognize it, but it may not be as unfortunate as I imagined, for I think quickly, speedily, possibly even now, on the very day when the ultimatum has been sent to Spain pursuant to the resolutions that passed here, this Government has practically recognized the Republic of Cuba, and I think possibly it is true—we will all know it by to-morrow morning—that that government is to-day being officially dealt with by the official representatives of this Government, as it should be.

Mr. HOAR (in his seat). That has probably happened.

Mr. FORAKER. The Senator from Massachusetts made a remark which I did not hear.

Mr. HOAR. I beg the Senator's pardon; I did not intend to interrupt him. I exclaimed what was simply in my mind, without being conscious myself that I spoke. What I said was what the Senator is now saying and what I said some time ago would probably happen.

Mr. FORAKER. Yes; I have no doubt the Senator predicted this, for he has been talking along this line, as I recollect, at various times. The only difference between the Senator and myself was as to when the recognition should come.

Mr. HOAR. And as to the question of constitutional power.

Mr. FORAKER. I have no trouble about constitutional power. I want to say to the Senator with respect to that question that every time he refers to it he talks about it as though it was a settled and established fact beyond all controversy that recognition is exclusively an Executive function.

Mr. HOAR. The Senator will pardon me. He said the only difference between him and me was what he stated, to which I added, "and the question of constitutional power," on which we also differed. I did not mean to make any affirmation about it except to state the fact of our difference.

Mr. FORAKER. There is that additional difference. I think I have perhaps said heretofore in the Senate, and I want to say again, that I do not at all agree with the Senator from Massachusetts that the recognition of either independence or belligerency is an exclusively Executive function. I want to say further that every time that question has been raised here in Congress, and it has been raised repeatedly, Congress has always contended that it had a right to participate at least with the Executive in all questions determining our foreign policy, including questions of recognition of belligerency and recognition of independence.

But if the Senator from Colorado will pardon me just one minute further, I wish to say a word in answer to the suggestion of the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. HOAR] the other evening that the proposition to recognize the independence of the Cuban Government had been as he thought injected into this debate merely for purposes of discord. I do not think the Senator could have been very deliberate in his consideration of this subject when he made that statement. I perhaps have a special right to answer that question in view of the fact that I introduced that proposition in the resolutions which I offered in the Senate, and which have now in substance, except as to one proposition, been adopted.

The resolutions that I introduced contained four propositions. One was that the people of the Island of Cuba are free and independent. That has been adopted. Another was that this Government should recognize the Republic of Cuba as the true and lawful government of that island. The third was that by reason of the character of that war, in its results upon our commerce and because of the humanitarian question involved, it was the duty of this Government to demand that Spain should at once abandon the island. The fourth proposition was that the President should be authorized and directed to carry these resolutions into effect. Three of these propositions have been accepted. The one in regard to the recognition of the republic was stricken out in the way all are familiar with. I had no thought of discord when I introduced that proposition. I was familiar with this record. I supposed it was a conceded fact that they had at least a de facto government in the Island of Cuba known as the Republic of Cuba.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio will suspend for a moment. The hour of 2 o'clock having arrived, it is the duty of the Chair to lay before the Senate the unfinished business.

Mr. MILLS. I ask unanimous consent that the unfinished business may be laid aside informally.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas will allow the Chair to have the unfinished business stated.

Mr. MILLS. Certainly.

The SECRETARY. A bill (S. 2680) amending "An act granting additional quarantine powers and imposing additional duties upon the Marine-Hospital Service," approved February 15, 1893.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas asks unanimous consent that the unfinished business be temporarily laid aside. Is there objection? The Chair hears none. The Senator from Ohio will proceed.

Mr. FORAKER. Mr. President, I have only a word or two more to say. I supposed it was a conceded fact, conceded by everybody, that there was such a government as the Republic of Cuba. I supposed all were familiar with this record, and I sup-

posed surely it was a conceded fact on the part of the Administration, the present Administration, when the present Secretary of State acting here as a Senator had employed the language which I have quoted.

Furthermore, as an answer to the suggestion that this proposition was introduced for purposes of discord, I will state that before the proposition was introduced here I talked with the President in regard to it. I showed him the resolution, and while he had some concern as to the form of it, I did not understand that he had any objection to it on principle. With me it was only a question as to the particular time when that resolution or something else like it should be introduced. Events came quickly, one coming following after another, and it seemed to me after the *Maine* report was in that the way was clear for some action to be taken, and that that was an appropriate time to introduce the resolution, and I introduced it.

That resolution was introduced at a time when it was being given out through the press, and I suppose it was at least a semi-official announcement, that the President had notified Spain as a condition precedent to everything else which might be agreed upon that there should be on the part of Spain a recognition of the absolute independence of the people of the Island of Cuba. That was given out, I supposed, with authority. We were made to understand in our committee that that condition precedent had been made, and I had no idea that in introducing my resolutions I was not in harmony with at least the general purposes of the Administration with respect to this question. And so it was I had no thought or purpose to create any discord, but was only intending and purposing to discharge, according to my conviction, what I conceived to be a very grave, important, and responsible duty.

That resolution was introduced, injecting that proposition into this controversy, I do not recall now how many days, but a week or ten days before the President's message came in. I supposed that when we received the President's message we would be advised that a recognition on the part of Spain of the independence of Cuba had been insisted upon. I was forced to conclude when the message was read that that demand had not been made; otherwise surely the President would have made some mention of it.

A day or two later, however, I saw in a newspaper what I understood to be a semi-official statement that such a telegram had been prepared, and that after it had left the hands of the President, upon being revised by the Attorney-General, he had taken the liberty to strike out the word "independent" and insert in lieu of it the word "stable." But even that statement showed that the recognition of an independent government there was in harmony with the ideas of the President. The Senator from Nebraska [Mr. THURSTON] has just now kindly handed me the newspaper article to which I have referred, and I will read it in order that it may appear in the RECORD in connection with the remarks I have just been making. It is taken from the Washington Post. It is entitled "Why independence was omitted."

It became known yesterday why independence was omitted from the message. When President McKinley first made his propositions to the Spanish Government, he announced that the war must cease in Cuba and an independent government be established. This dispatch was changed by Attorney-General Griggs to read "stable government," which, it was claimed, was the diplomatic phrase for the independence desired. When Minister Woodford submitted that dispatch to the Spanish prime minister, he was asked if "stable government" meant independent government, and at once

replied in the negative, assuring Señor Sagasta that the United States looked only to a system of self government like the Canadians enjoy.

Afterwards, believing that he might have made a mistake, Mr. Woodford cabled the President as to the intention of this Government, and was promptly informed that the word "stable" must be interpreted "independent." As all suggestions for independence had caused much indignation and resistance on the part of the Spanish Government, Minister Woodford feared to make his demand, and, as a matter of fact, the ultimatum for independence was never officially laid before Spain, Mr. Woodford believing that it would be a constant irritation and menace in what might follow. He repeatedly suggested it to Señor Sagasta in private as being the view of the President, but as it had never been submitted in writing, the President had to omit it from the message. This is an intimation semiofficially made of the President's message.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. President, may I ask the Senator from Ohio a question?

Mr. FORAKER. Certainly.

Mr. CHANDLER. He having read the newspaper statement as to this diplomatic correspondence, I ask him whether the Committee on Foreign Relations, before it made its report to the Senate recommending the resolutions which have passed, knew what the diplomatic correspondence actually was, or were the members of the committee obliged to take it from a newspaper; and did they take it from the newspaper slip which the Senator from Nebraska has just handed to the Senator from Ohio to refresh his recollection as to what the diplomatic correspondence was?

Mr. FORAKER. Answering the Senator from New Hampshire, I will state that the Committee on Foreign Relations has never been advised as to what the diplomatic correspondence is, except only a statement has been generally made of the character I have already stated, that the demand of this Government was a recognition on the part of Spain of the independence of Cuba.

Mr. ALLISON (in his seat). That demand was made.

Mr. LINDSAY. Mr. President—

Mr. TILLMAN. May I ask the Senator from Ohio a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Ohio yield to the Senator from Kentucky?

Mr. FORAKER. I want the statement just made by the Senator from Iowa [Mr. ALLISON] first to go upon the record. I understand the Senator from Iowa to say now that the demand was made, but, if he will pardon me, I would rather he would make it in his own way.

Mr. ALLISON. Although I have no authority to say so, as I have not conversed with anybody who has heard it stated, I understand there is no question of the fact that that demand was made of Spain; that it was sent to the Spanish Government and a copy of it was sent to the Spanish minister in this city.

Mr. HALE. That is, that the intervention of the President should be to the end that an independent government should be established; not that the so-called government of the insurgents should be recognized, but that the intervention of this Government should be to the end that an independent government should be established. I suppose the Senator does not think that the demand was put in the form of Spain being required to recognize the insurgent government.

Mr. PASCO. I wish to suggest to the Senator from Iowa to be a little more clear in stating just exactly what that demand was, because his language is indefinite.

Mr. ALLISON. One can not be very clear when he is giving hearsay evidence. Therefore I only intimated to the Senator

from Ohio that I had learned from sources which I considered reliable that in the course of this correspondence the President did say to the Spanish Government that there must be an independent government in Cuba; and that demand was submitted not only to the Spanish Government in Madrid, but a copy of it was sent to the minister here. Perhaps I ought not to say this in public debate, but so understanding the fact, I did say so to the Senator from Ohio in my seat. As I do not speak in this matter except, as I state, from hearsay, I can be no more definite in my statement than I have been.

Mr. TILLMAN. Mr. President—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Iowa yield to the Senator from South Carolina?

Mr. TILLMAN. I should like to ask the Senator from Iowa or the Senator from Maine, or anyone else here who is expected to be the mouthpiece of the Administration on this subject, to answer this question: Is it the rule of the President to allow the Attorney-General to change a word in his dispatch to a foreign government without his consent, and is it the rule of the ministers sent abroad by the United States to refuse to deliver the dispatches that are sent to them?

Mr. HALE. I do not consider this to be a very important controversy just now; I do not think the Senator from Ohio does.

Mr. FORAKER. No; I do not, so far as the matter itself is concerned.

Mr. HALE. It is not claimed by anybody, whatever the dispatch was, that it originally was intended to be a recognition of the so-called government of the insurgents, but it was a proposition that this country would intervene to the end that there should be in Cuba a free and independent government.

Mr. TILLMAN. From whom does the Senator from Maine get that? Out of the air?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senators will please address the Chair.

Mr. HALE. The Senator from Ohio has followed this matter very closely. I do not suppose the Committee on Foreign Relations claims that that original dispatch, before it was at all altered, if altered by the Attorney-General, covered the proposition that Spain was to recognize that particular government, but that we should establish there a free and independent government.

Mr. FORAKER. Mr. President, I never heard of the proposition that we were to establish any kind of a government in Cuba until we got the message of the President. What I heard, what we all heard, in so far as I have any information, was this: That the President was diplomatically negotiating through our minister, Woodford, with the Government of Spain, and that in the course of those negotiations he had instructed the minister to make certain demands, and that he had made a condition precedent to everything else the absolute recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba. That is the way it came to me. I have not seen the correspondence; I do not know what it would disclose. We would be glad to see it if we could.

Mr. LINDSAY. Mr. President—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Ohio yield to the Senator from Kentucky?

Mr. FORAKER. If the Senator will pardon me just a moment until I add another sentence, I will state why I have dwelt upon

it. I want to make it appear, by snowing these facts, that at the time when this proposition was incorporated in these resolutions, and when they were subsequently insisted upon, there was no thought thereby of creating any discord. On the contrary, we thought we were doing exactly what it would be the purpose of this Government to do, for I will confess frankly that it never occurred to me that if we were to recognize the independence of the people of Cuba, we would deny recognition to that political organization under the direction and control of which that independence had been achieved. I supposed the republic would be recognized, as a matter of course, if we declared that the people of the island were free and independent, and it was not an idle purpose we had in putting that into the resolutions.

The reason may not have been valid for it, but my idea was a very simple one. I thought if we recognized the independence of the people of Cuba, as we do in the first paragraph, and I thought we were entitled to do it, according to the principles of international law applicable, we thereby at once changed the legal status of the people of Cuba from that of subjects of Spain to inhabitants of that island. That was highly important if we were to have war, for when we make war on Spain we make war on all her subjects everywhere. I am sure I did not want to make war on the Cubans, even technically. Then I had this further purpose. When I drafted the resolution and put the second proposition in, that we would recognize the Republic of Cuba as the true and lawful government of the island, it occurred to me, as I undertook to set forth in the remarks I made the other day, that if we went down there and intermeddled, to use an international law term, in the affairs of another people, and drove the Spanish Government out and set up a government of our own, and failed to recognize the government that was there, we at least ran a serious risk of being liable for the debts for which the revenues of that island have been pledged.

I have never seen the form of that pledge; I have never seen the legislation whereby those revenues were pledged; I have been unable to get it, although I have tried to get it. Therefore I do not know what the exact facts are, but I have seen it stated over and over again, without any contradiction, that by the Kingdom of Spain the revenues from the Island of Cuba have been pledged to the payment of a certain indebtedness, at least the interest. It seemed to me that we ran a risk of becoming liable for that indebtedness, and it not occurring to me that there was any objection upon principle to the recognition of the Republic of Cuba, but it occurring to me that by that recognition we could shut the door against that possible liability, I thought it was wise to insert that proposition. That is all there was of it, and all this talk which has since arisen about a combination between Democrats and certain Republicans at the instigation of Mr. Bryan is entirely without any foundation, so far as I am aware.

I have never had the good fortune to so much as even see Mr. Bryan. I never saw him to know him, at least. I have no acquaintance with him. I never had any communication with him directly or indirectly on this subject or any other.

I have acted in this matter, Mr. President, from the beginning without a thought that partisan politics would at any stage become a feature of the controversy. I have felt that it was not a political question. It is a question, it is true, with respect to which politi-

cal parties have made declarations; but the true interpretation of the declarations which have been made in the party platforms would make them all mean practically one and the same thing.

Therefore, in dealing with the subject, I have had no thought with respect to any of my colleagues to stop and consider and inquire whether they were Populists, Democrats, or Republicans. I have felt this was a great national question, a great international question, a question in dealing with which we should remember, not that we are Democrats or Populists, or Free Silver Republicans, or stalwart and unqualified Republicans, but only that we are Americans—Americans all.

I have sought to deal with the matter in that spirit. I intend to go on dealing with it in that spirit. I have no feeling of hostility toward anybody who has a duty to discharge with respect to it. The duties of the President have been of the most serious and grave character. I think he has in the discharge of them undertaken, according to his best judgment, to do his whole duty. He may have made mistakes. I do not know who has the right to say whether he has made mistakes or not; but it may be that with respect to this matter he has perhaps not done exactly as others might have done if they had been in his place, but only time can tell whether the President has made a mistake or whether, if others had been in his place and had acted differently, they would have made a mistake.

Let us, instead of cavilling about these matters and trying to draw party lines, remember that this is a question with respect to which we should try to be united; and it was because it was a question of that character that I was willing, after I had done my full duty in an effort to get a recognition of the Republic of Cuba, to abandon that proposition in the interest of harmony, and to secure an agreement and pass the resolutions.

That is all I care to say, Mr. President.



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