

The Commoner.

Justice to Cuba

Congress has declared that the relations to exist between Cuba and the United States shall be according to the terms of the amendment to the army appropriation bill, which reads as follows:

That in fulfillment of the declaration contained in the joint resolution approved April 20, 1898, entitled "For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters and directing the president of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect," the president is hereby authorized to leave the government and control of the island of Cuba to its people so soon as a government shall have been established in said island under a constitution, which either as a part thereof, or in an ordinance appended thereto, shall define the future relations of the United States with Cuba, substantially as follows:

1.—That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgment in or control over any portion of said island.

2.—That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which the ordinary revenues of the islands, after defraying the current expenses of government, shall be inadequate.

3.—That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.

4.—That all acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated and all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected.

5.—That the government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the situation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemics and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba as well as to the commerce of southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.

6.—That the Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the proposed constitutional boundaries of Cuba, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty.

7.—That to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the president of the United States.

8.—That by way of further assurance the government of Cuba will embody the foregoing provisions in a permanent treaty with the United States.

Although considerable ingenuity was displayed in the preparation of this amendment, it is confessedly a complete repudiation of the pledge made by the United States government in the war resolutions. The preamble of this amendment declares "The President is hereby authorized to leave the government and control of the Island of Cuba to its people so soon as a government shall have been established in said island under a constitution," containing certain things specified in this amendment. This preamble also declares

that this is in fulfillment of the war resolutions.

It will be remembered that in the war resolutions the United States expressly disclaimed any intention or disposition to exercise "sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over the Island of Cuba except for the pacification thereof," and when that was accomplished "to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

Now the Congress seeks to provide altogether different conditions under which the "government and control of the island" will be "left" to its people.

Let us analyze the conditions herein made.

The first clause unquestionably would give to the United States the same powers of suzerainty which the South African Republic surrendered to Great Britain at the cost, as we see, of the republic's life.

The second clause is an assumption by the United States of sovereignty, jurisdiction and control over the financial affairs of the Cuban people.

The third clause would give the United States government the right to take possession of Cuba and sweep the Cuban government out of existence at any time when the American politicians in authority should conclude it was to their interests to do so. This clause involves even a more wholesale surrender of independence on the part of the Cubans than was required by Great Britain of the South African Republic.

The fourth clause is designed to protect the so-called "vested rights" acquired by administration speculators since our military forces have occupied Cuba.

The fifth clause is devised to give further recognition to the notion that in spite of the disclaimer the United States does have "sovereignty, jurisdiction or control" over the Island of Cuba. Certainly the people of Cuba will have just as much interest in devising and carrying out sanitary plans as the people of the United States will have. This clause is a mere pretense, as ingenious as the many other ingenious pretenses contained in this amendment.

The sixth clause is superfluous if it is not absolutely unjust. If the United States have title to the Isle of Pines, certainly that title would not be effected by anything which the Cuban constitutional convention may do.

The seventh clause is a piece of hypocrisy entirely in keeping with other portions of the amendment. For years the Monroe Doctrine has been sufficient to enable the United States to maintain the independence of the South American republics. It would seem that the Monroe Doctrine should be sufficient to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, should it ever develop that the people of that island were incapable of maintaining their own independence.

The entire plan denies the claim of the war resolutions that the people of Cuba "are and of right ought to be free and independent." It seeks to place upon the young republic limitations and conditions which must humiliate the patriots of that island, and which would deny that complete independence so essential to a successful republic.

The world was not surprised when it was told that the Cuban statesmen would not consent to these conditions. Exactly what course they will

adopt has not yet been determined. A hint as to their course may be obtained by resolutions introduced into the Cuban constitutional convention, as follows:

The government of Cuba will not make a treaty or agreement with any foreign power which may compromise or limit the independence of Cuba, or which may permit or authorize any power to obtain by means of colonization or for military or naval purposes, or in any other way, any foothold or authority, or right over any portion of Cuba.

Second—The government will not permit its territory to be used as a base of operations for war against the United States or against any foreign nation.

Third—The government of Cuba accepts in its entirety the treaty of Paris, in which are affirmed the rights of Cuba, to the extent of the obligations which are explicitly indicated in these, and especially those which the international law imposes for the protection of life and property.

Fourth—It recognizes as legally valid all acts of the military government, during the period of occupation, also the rights arising out of them in conformity with the joint resolution and the Foraker amendment and the existing laws of the country.

Fifth—The governments of the United States and Cuba ought to regulate their commercial relations by means of a treaty based on reciprocity and with tendencies toward free trade in natural and manufactured products, mutually assuring ample special advantages in their respective markets.

Practically, these resolutions embrace all that the United States has a right to demand. In these resolutions any fears the United States may have that Cuba might lose its independence are allayed. There is the promise that in order to absolutely maintain this independence no power shall obtain any foothold or authority, civil, naval, or military, in any part of the Cuban jurisdiction. There is the assurance that Cuban territory will never be used as a base of operations for war against the United States. There is the assumption by the Cuban government of every pledge made by the United States government in the treaty of Paris. There is the promise that all acts of the military government will be recognized as valid, and that all rights arising out of those acts will be duly recognized, with the very sensible proviso that these rights must have been acquired in conformity with the war resolutions and the existing laws of the country. Finally, there is the declaration that there should be made between the United States and Cuba treaties of mutual interest to the two countries.

If we are to keep the pledge made in the war resolutions, these Cuban resolutions contain all the assurances the United States have a right to require. Explicitly and frankly they deal with the only things in which we have any concern, if we are not hypocrites, and if we do not desire to exercise "sovereignty, jurisdiction or control" over the island of Cuba.

The Cuban people cannot be expected to accede to the terms of the amendment as adopted by the American Congress. The politicians behind the administration seem to be anxious to acquire "a new insurrection."

It is to be hoped that the Cubans will recognize that the amendment adopted by Congress is the opinion of republican leaders and not the opinion of the American people. The republican platform of 1900 contained the following plank: "To Cuba independence and self-government were assured in the same voice by which war was declared, and to the letter this pledge should be performed." As the democrats, populists and silver republicans also declared in favor of Cuban independence, it is fair to assume that a large majority of the voters of all parties are opposed to conditions prescribed by the administration. This sentiment ought to be expressed before the Cubans are alienated. No nation is great enough or strong enough to do injustice to another nation, however weak; still less can a guardian afford to be unjust to a ward. The administration is repudiating the pledge of its party as well as the promise of the nation. Now is the time for honest, independent and patriotic republicans to speak out before an irreparable injury is done.