

Castañer Newsletter

BRUMBAUGH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT
Vol. VI, No. 4 (#65)

Castaner, Puerto Rico

BRETHREN SERVICE COMMISSION
December 1, 1947

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GOVERNOR PINERO VISITS CASTANER

(Translated from EL MUNDO, San Juan newspaper, Tuesday, November 25, 1947)

THE DIVIDENDS OF THE VANILLA COOPERATIVE PAID
Pinero Distributed \$30,000 To The Growers Of The Adjuntas Cooperative

Accompanied by his secretary, Mr. Emilio Lopez, and by Mr. James P. Davis, head of the Division of Territories and Possessions of the Department of Interior of the United States, Governor Jesus T. Pinero attended the annual assembly of the Vanilla Growers Cooperative of Adjuntas, and distributed around \$30,000 in dividends among the 200 members of the Cooperative, the largest check being \$5,000.

The Mayor of Adjuntas, Jose B. Barcelo, presented the visitors and later accompanied them in visiting other parts of the Castaner Project. Mr. Davis and the Governor spoke a few words before the members of the Cooperative, congratulating them for the interest and success of this organization.

Before this, Mr. Davis, Pinero and Lopez had attended a meeting of the 4-H clubs which was held at the Community Center of the Castaner Project. There they also spoke a few words recognizing the ideals and work of these clubs and their leaders in this community, Miss Rosa Ester Lespier, home demonstration agent, and Salvador Colon.

The Vanilla Cooperative, whose meeting was held in the curing plant, later served a Puerto Rican dinner to the visitors.

In the afternoon they visited the Second Unit School at Rabanos where another meeting of the 4-H clubs was held, and also a meeting of the Consumers Cooperative, speaking in general about the work of these organizations. The Consumers Cooperative of Castaner, which is greatly needed, has been organized only a few months.

Finally they visited and inspected the different aspects of the work of the Brethren in the Castaner Project, holding with the Unit members an exchange of ideas in relation to the work that they have done in the community. Not only Mr. Davis, but also Governor Pinero showed great interest and was much impressed with the work of the Brethren, promising all the help possible that this work might continue in benefit of the citizens of Adjuntas and the neighboring localities.

Besides vocational guidance and some work in agriculture, the Brethren give medical attention through the hospital and clinics. During this exchange of impressions, the Governor informed them that he has two children studying in a college operated by the Friends, a similar religious organization in the United States.

After eating with the Brethren, Mr. Davis, Governor Pinero, and Mr. Lopez inspected the store of the Consumers Cooperative, and later spent about two hours in the restaurant, which is an annex to the store, discussing with various granjeros and veterans of the community some of the problems which exist in the community.

Before returning to the Capital, already quite late, and having coffee in Adjuntas, Mr. Davis, Governor Pinero, and Mr. Lopez repeated again to Mayor Barcelo their satisfaction with the work at the Castaner Project, again offering their help and cooperation. Mr. Davis also expressed his delight with the climate and temperature of Adjuntas.

DISCOVERY DAY

Puerto Ricans observe many holidays. With the Continentals they observe Columbus Day on October 12th. But they also have another holiday which is strictly their own--Discovery Day on November 19th.

Christopher Columbus discovered Puerto Rico on November 19, 1493 on his second voyage to the New World, and this is the only land yet under the United States flag which was ever visited by that indomitable discoverer. (When he discovered "America" in 1492, Columbus landed on little San Salvador or Watling Island in the Bahamas, which group of islands is under the British rule).

Columbus stopped here for fresh drinking water on the northwest corner of Puerto Rico near the coastal towns of Aguadilla and Aguada, both of which today claim the honor. He took possession of the Island for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, and named it San Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist). In 1521 this name was applied to the principal port, and its original Spanish name of Puerto Rico was applied to the Island as a whole, and this reversal of names still holds today. The original Indian name for the Island was Boriquen, which is now spelled Borinquen, and the people were originally called Boricuas.

In many cities throughout the Island the discovery of Puerto Rico by Christopher Columbus is recognized by statues of the discoverer, and many city plazas bear the name of Cristobal Colon.

ECLIPSE OF THE SUN

On November 12th there was an annular eclipse of the sun, but this feature occurred only in the mid-Pacific and in the jungle parts of South America, particularly in Brazil. Puerto Rico was privileged to see a partial eclipse of the sun, however, which was 47% of total, and that was far and away the greatest amount of eclipse visible anywhere in U. S. territory with the two exceptions of Hawaii and the Panama Canal Zone, where each saw eclipses that were 62% of total. We were also fortunate in that the time of greatest eclipse occurred just at sunset, making a very beautiful sight. At Castaner many people saw the eclipse, although the weather was partly cloudy and rainy that day. Some other parts of the Island had excellent visibility.

ADJUNTAS ALCALDE VISITS STATES

The Honorable Jose B. Barcelo, Mayor of the Municipality of Adjuntas, and Chairman of the Citron Cooperative at Adjuntas, was recently sent to the States by the Cooperative to get acquainted with their old customers as well as to make new contacts. He took advantage of this trip by paying surprise visits to many Puerto Rican friends in New York City and former Unit members scattered throughout the East.

After spending some time in New York City he took a side trip up to New Haven, Connecticut to see the Martins. Although Jim had left that morning for Oregon, Mary entertained him by playing her Puerto Rican records and serving some Nescafe. After tasting the Nescafe, Mayor Barcelo promised to send them some good Puerto Rican coffee when he returned to the Island.

In Chicago he saw many ex-Castanerities. He had dinner with Herman and Margarita Will where he was entertained by seeing slides of Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba and Europe. He was very surprised to find that Herman now speaks fluent Spanish and would use no English in his conversation. He visited Mr. Will's office with the Methodist Peace Commission and was impressed by the fact that they hired people of different races and they were able to work together in complete harmony. He also enjoyed hearing about Herman's trip to Europe and the World Conference of Christian Youth in Oslo, Norway.

He was able to see the Groffs quite often and here he received real Puerto Rican coffee made in the native style by Elsa. Here he also saw Eduvino Galarza and Manuel Quiles who are living with the Groffs and working in the laundry of Bethany Hospital. He visited both the Seminary and the Hospital. At the latter he saw Carmen Kindy who was a patient there. He also went with Everett to the airport to meet Iris Rodriguez who arrived to study at Northwestern University. Later both he and Iris had dinner with Rev. John Eller, brother of Edna Eller.

He received a dinner invitation to the home of former Governor and Mrs. Rexford G. Tugwell in Chicago where Dr. Tugwell is now associated with the University of Chicago.

In Elgin he renewed acquaintances with Dr. M. R. Zigler, W. Harold Row and H. Spencer Minnich, all of whom he had met in Puerto Rico. In conference with Dr. Zigler and Mr. Row he expressed appreciation for the service being rendered by the Brethren in Puerto Rico. He also told them about the progress being made on the Municipal Hospital and Community Center in Adjuntas. While in Elgin he was also the guest of Mr. Minnich at the **Kiwanis** Club.

From Chicago Mr. Barcelo went to Washington, D. C. for a discussion of Puerto Rican insular affairs with representatives of the Federal Government. From there he took a bus down through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to Bridgewater where he had supper with Rufus and Wanda King. In visiting the college he talked with James Mason, Cesar Claudio, and Jose Ramon Sanchez, all students at Bridgewater. The Mayor says that he liked Virginia best of all the states he was in, as the people and land reminded him more of Puerto Rico. He was impressed with the beautiful farms and the "simpatico" people.

Returning to New York the Mayor had dinner with John Jahn and the Everett Myer family at the hotel where the Myers were staying on their recent return trip to Puerto Rico. In New York he was also able to see many of the people he learned to know when he lived there before, and many who have moved there from Adjuntas.

Mayor Barcelo says that after visiting the different Brethren institutions such as Bethany Seminary and Hospital, the Brethren Publishing House, and Bridge-water College, he is now better able to understand the work which the Brethren are doing at Castaner. He reports that he had a very interesting and eventful trip and that he is looking forward to the time when he can return and see more of the States

THINGS NEW IN THE CHILDREN'S WARD

The hospital at Castaner is a barrack-type of building like our other buildings, and from its outside appearance there is nothing to cause one to suspect that it is the hospital. The inside, however, is different. Through the work of the doctors, nurses, maintenance men and many others for over five years it has been developed into a building that gives a real refuge to the sick.

The most recent improvements have been made in our Pediatric Ward. This is a particularly busy place, and, it might be added, noisy. Nearly always more beds are needed. This ward has been equipped with four large cribs and a bassinet. Sometimes when the babies are quite small a crib is divided with a makeshift partition so that two babies may occupy the same crib. This made it possible to accommodate five or six children, but it was very unfavorable and too crowded.

The room as it was also had no water at hand. Everyone realizes how children and small babies may have been cleaned up one minute and the next look as though no one had given them any attention for hours--and our Puerto Rican children are no different.

In the north end of the room a sink has recently been installed. This sink is large enough to serve as a bathtub for most of the children. On each side of the sink is a washtable used for the dressing and undressing of the children who are being admitted or discharged. The washtables are also used to change the babies and when bathing them. Above and below the sink are shelves on which to store linen, blankets, mosquito nets and the utensils necessary in the care of children. Now the equipment is near at hand, including running hot and cold water. Now a dirty face can be washed or a shampoo given in the time that it formerly took to gather the supplies together.

The beds have been improved also. We had one crib that was slowly but surely falling apart. This we decided to discard, and in its place we now have four small beds. These beds are half the size of the large cribs and occupy the far end of the ward. They are placed on a long low table which has a shelf underneath for placing trays and medications while getting the baby in position to feed it. These small beds have hinged ends which can be let down or opened so that it is easier to care for the baby, and it is no longer necessary to hang over the side of the bed. The other three large cribs are in good condition and remain in use for the larger children. Now the ward has a capacity of seven without any crowding. Even so it is still sometimes necessary to use a large adult bed for a child. Certainly the addition of the sink and the four new beds helps us to give the sick children more efficient care.

Of course the sink was purchased. But the maintenance department built the shelves and wash tables and installed everything. Dr. Burke built the new beds, the nurses and nurse-aids painted them, and some of the nurses and cooks made the new mattresses for them. Now we are all proud of the pediatric ward and have a feeling of satisfaction, knowing that it was made possible by the cooperation of so many people

LOS DEPORTES

November 11th was a full day for the sport fans of Castaner with Yauco High School coming for a day of fellowship and play. Because of the damp softball field the basketball game had to be played in the forenoon under the hot sun. None of the players were overcome by heat, but several slowed down considerably for the remainder of the day. Castaner's fast break soon won them a good margin which they held throughout the game, winning 49 to 22. Softball and volleyball were played in the afternoon. The local boys won the softball game, but were defeated by the visitors in volleyball.

The Unit members spent the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day wearing off their pork-chop dinner playing a softball doubleheader with Mayor Barcelo's "Oldsters" from Adjuntas. A good time was had by all, with sore muscles resulting, although we lost both games, the first (seven innings) 15-17, the second (3 innings) 4-5.

The long-anticipated basketball game with Polytechnic Institute of San German proved to be one of the best-matched games that we have played. The half period ended with Poly one point in the lead, 19-18. Then in the second period Castaner edged ahead to win 39 to 31.

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PERSONNEL NEWS:--On October 20th Rosa Claudio, R. N. of Yahuecas, began work as our Public Health Nurse. Rosa recently graduated from Presbyterian Hospital in Santurce at the head of her class. She is now doing the work which was being done by Alys Haag. Walter and Alys Haag left for the States on November 13th for a two month trip during which they will visit with Walter's folks in California and with Alys' folks in Pennsylvania. Walter was our laundryman and Alys was our Public Health Nurse. On their return Walter will take over supervision of the farm and Alys will supervise the women's needlework industry.

Chester and Lila Peckover arrived here on November 21st from their previous work at New Windsor, Maryland. Chester has taken over the supervision of the laundry from Dean Rohrer who is now helping with and preparing to do the medical social work for the Project. Lila has joined our kitchen staff. Both she and Thelma Strite were cooks at New Windsor prior to coming to Castaner (the poor folks at New Windsor will soon have to eat in a restaurant if we continue to take their cooks).

On November 30th the members of the Castaner Project were invited to the finca (farm) of Delfin Rodriguez at kilometer 26 on the Yauco road for a big lechon asado (roast pig) dinner. About sixteen Puerto Rican and Continental Unit members were able to attend. Mr. Delfin Rodriguez also gave a sizable check towards the work of the Castaner Project.

ERRATA:--Through a deplorable oversight the name of Beth Roop, Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana was omitted from the list of Alumni Addresses in the Newsletter of October 1st. Through typographical errors the arrival dates of Homer and Marguerite Burke should be changed to July 25, 1946 in the September issue giving the roster of the Project. Also there are nine, not eight, former CPS men as the name of Cecil Wickline should also be so marked. On page 3 of the November Newsletter on the Co-op Conference article, Mr. Peter Manniche is of the International People's College at Elsinore, near Copenhagen.