Polytechnic Institute of Porto Rico

Report of the President to the Board of Trustees
April 13, 1922

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MEMBERS

THE TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE OF PORTO RICO.

This, the tenth year, has been a most remarkable year and the best of the ten. It has been remarkable in the number of applications for admission constantly coming into the office. There has been an average of about three applications daily during the school year since September, fully 200 more than we could admit. It has been a gratifying year to know that so few of those admitted have left. It is an epoch in that for the first time we offered the first year college work, and of the 13 graduates from the fourth year high school last June, 10 returned to enter the Polytechnic college plans. For the first time in our history have local receipts for tuition and board paid into the till. The local receipts for the year 1922-23 were $12,530.18, and for this year were estimated at $13,800.00. The total expenses for the year 1922-23 were $14,800.18, or 71% of the total expenditures. Students paid all expenses except salaries, and $1600 on salaries. It has been a thrilling year. For a second time a storm ruined several of our homes. It did it so cleverly this time that several girls did not know the roof had gone till they were pulled out from under their beds where they had fallen asleep from weariness. It has been a year of surpising realizations. One of the happiest surprisets of the year to the teachers and students is to watch daily the walls of the beautiful new Science Hall growing into reality. This building is bringing renewed hope and assurance to all Porto Ricans. There is no other building on the island that can compare with it in imposing and architectural appearance. Though not completely finished the commencement exercises are to be held in this attractive building. The strength of a giant, the beauty of youth and
the simplicity of true greatness have been worked into the design of this our first large building by Mr. Mouton our architect, and one feels the impressiveness of refined character expressed in concrete.

The religious life has run deep this year. There are 90 candidates for the ministry. Fully one-half of the students are actively engaged in Sunday School work outside of the Institute. Eleven groups of students hold 12 services weekly.

Some of the services are conducted have an average attendance of 125. Thirty-two students were baptized at a recent communion service. Many of the students, in fact all but a dozen of the larger students are active members of the church. The Evangelical Union of Porto Rico has made the Institute its permanent location for Summer Conferences. All denominations come here where local and foreign speakers are brought to conduct the meetings. The object is to give all Christians an opportunity to get together and to receive new power for their work. It is in spirit a second Northfield.

While the spiritual man is cared for we do not forget the physical and the intellectual. Our graduates have been awarded the highest marks in the Normal Hall of the island for the past five years. No evidence has appeared the superiority of the preparation of graduates of the Polytechnic Institute above itself that last year the Dean of the Summer School publicly announced to all the students that the Polytechnic Institute students had superior advantages over the other High School students and it was not just to compare others with them. We demand of all students high scholarship and through cooperation. The teachers always put their best service into the work for and with the students.

We have improved greatly this year on the food of students. The improvement has been along the line of variety of dishes served. Rice and beans, bread, coffee and meat are the staple foods. At the present time our tables are supplied daily with fresh vegetables from our own gardens. Our gardens are the finest on the Island. It is generally supposed that truck gardens do not pay in Porto Rico, that in, can not be grown. After years of trial of one of our graduates we have found him a man who is proving in the gardens almost everything there is to grow. We hope to make such practical demonstration of truck gardening till some day the common people will produce all green food needed for their families. Porto Ricans are today living on canned or dried food with very little green vegetables. Porto Rico could supply New York with winter vegetables or vegetables the year round could the people only realize the possibility of such. Here has a brand field of usefulness for our agricultural department.

The Latin is naturally musical. Through the kindness of Dr. and Mrs. D. R. Wald we have a well equipped band of twenty-five pieces. Public concerts are given in the town plaza by our band.

The hospital has been well furnished by the Ladies' Auxiliary. Had we a doctor it would be in daily duty from our student body. Nothing serious has appeared but there are many of the youth who need the care of a doctor. Our budget this year does not warrant the addition of a doctor's salary.

The attendance during the year has been exceptionally regular with a high grade of students. The enrollment is as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Barranquitas</th>
<th>Toa Alta</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>394</td>
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<td>446</td>
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<td>By residence</td>
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<td>161</td>
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The average per capita cost during the year for board is $4.25 monthly.

Our institution is today beswong the merit and benefits of learning on the Island. There is no attempt made to teach sectarian doctrines, but there is no covering up of the fact that the Bible is taught in its entirety according to the fundamental Bible doctrines accepted by all denominations as essential to Christianity. It is a Christian institution and apart from that it is nothing.

The Stevens of the Porto Rican faith in the Polytechnic Institute is evidenced by their gifts and their desire to attend the school. On March 18 I started out alone to secure $20,000 for the Girls' Residence Hall. The times are critical in Porto Rico, more so than in New York. Sugar is down below the cost of production to the farmer. The coffee crop was a failure. Banks do not have money. I divided the $20,000 up into 600 gifts of $20. In eleven days of actual soliciting I assured in cash and checks classes $38,156 from 76 individuals. No gift less than $100 was accepted. Five were for $1,000 and one for $2,000. I had to stop soliciting to come to this meeting today. There is no doubt that the whole $60,000 will be raised in Porto Rico for the First Residence Hall for Girls. The spirit of the giving in Porto Rico encourages me. The leading leaders of the Island made him contributions and then followed me to the door of his office saying: "You may hear people say that because you are a Protestant institution they do not care to help you. I want you to understand that such is not true with us. Any institution that is helping Porto Rico has our hearty support. You are doing a great work. May God give you strength and long years till you see those plans all realized." A similar sincere good wish was expressed by almost every man.

This good will is met with a smiling face in every town from students who were once in the Institute for a longer or shorter time. They recall their struggles here but are glad.
of the experience for they found here the secret of service, a
living faith in God.

Students are housed away six and seven in a room in
dormitory. The balconies are obstructed by rails, study
tables and wash stands. There is no place for such in the
rooms. One boy slept for weeks on top of two boxes till a
bed could be secured for him. There are hundreds of others
who would do the same thing if they could get admission.

I have come to dread the summer months. It is hard to
select the few from among so many worthy young people,
none of whom are equally qualified for admission. It
gives me a thrill the cold sneaker have to say no to an applicant
especially when he knows the student has no other place to go.
Of the 9,130,748 children of Porto Rico, 1,097,794 can not find
a seat in the public schools. The neighboring islands have no
schools worthy the name. Santo Domingo and the Virgin
Islands are looking to Porto Rico for a place to educate their
children. Four students are admitted from the Virgin
Islands by name Petersen, Young, Mehl and Annie Beatty.
After two days of sailing over a rough sea, Mr. Beatty, a two
hundred year old skeptical Scotch-Irish, the father of the two
girls, landed on us with two boys, Wolff and Mcintosh, and
a 새로운 girl in addition to the four admitted, not one of
whom could speak Spanish. There were no places for the
extra three. Mr. Beatty groans with all the fire and sinness
of his ancestors when they knew they are doing what ought
to be done and says: "See, Roy, Harris, you will not make
me take these children back to their parents. I was asked to
bring them and I brought them. They were not sick all the
time. Their clothes are wet and old water. Money, sir, I can not take them back. I will be there late and they
may sleep on the balconies, but don’t make me take them back,
please, sir." The three are sleeping tonight on the old, run
infested, dilapidated dormitory balconies.

One of our graduates, now a missionary in Santo
Domingo, went to a Dominican girl with a sunny smile. She
knew not a word of English. She came a month ahead of
the rest and had made use of her allowance. She is a nice,
attentive girl with a small suit case enclosing all her earthly
possessions and with that sunny smile that has not come off
since I told her she could stay.

Parents accompany their children seeking for admission.
They come, some in tucha and Peeds, on the train or in a
car, horseback and a foot. We recall a father riding a
thin pony with his long shanked boy walking by his side.
The father had recently been hurt in a copper mine. He
came from over on the Caribbean coast. The best student possible
admitilad without some charges had been admitted. The
father with his boy started to leave but stopped under the
shade of a tree nearby the office. I saw tears rolling down
the father’s cheeks, tears of unavowed but of disappointment
of hopelessness for his boy’s future. They both left. Later in the
day he returned saying, “My boy is crushed in. I am no good anymore. My life is a failure. I want my
boy to do better. I can save him nothing. I want to give him
an education. I have only my way and will pay five dollars
monthly till the money is gone. Won’t you take him? What
else could a failure do?”

So we are beseeched by hundreds of young people whom
we can not admit. Everywhere I go they beg me to admit
students. I called on my friend Mr. Antonio Barcelo, whom
name is familiar now to politicians in New York. I had not
much more than take my seat till he began, “Last I forgot it
let me ask you if you can take in a boy for me.” Then his
wife joined her plea with those of her husband.

Take Porto Rico as the centre. Draw a circle of 1,500
miles radius. It will touch or include 16 different autono
with a population of 21 millions, sitting in the shade of walls
with 100 years before the Platica landed in America. All these
are within the field of influence of the Polytechnic Institute.
All these are a Christian institution of learning like the Poly-
technic Institute should not only a place to educate their
children but also a model of the highest type and the most
modern in equipment after which all these countries may pat-
tern and an honor to the Christian people of North America.

Will you place yourself for a moment in Porto Rico.
At our North is America with her men of vision and action,
a nation of Christian homes. Our people are educated, rich
and generous, because our standards were set by practical
Christian leaders. To the South of us is America, rich in
good resources—probably far richer in natural resources than
North America. There are 71 millions of people, 66 millions of
who are semi-pagan. Only a few of the remaining 50 mil-
ions are educated. North America has principally one
language, the English. South America has principally one
language, the Spanish. While midway between the practical
Christianism of North America and the impractical visionary
Christianism of South America lies the Pearl of the Antilles
Porto Rico, destined by God to become the common ground of
mutual understanding of the two races. Here lie where the
Latin and Satan are meeting as they are in no other place.
The two languages are official languages and are mutually
more generally understood daily. Here in Porto Rico is the
place for establishing a standard. A school is the greatest
force for promoting and perpetuating ideas and ideals
and practical outcomes. An education should be broad as
well as deep and deep as broad and broad as broad. It should take in the whole
man, a trained mind to think, a developed heart to feel and a
strong hand to do, being all of the intellectual, spiritual
and physical faculties of man into a co-ordinated harmonic
service for the common good of the human race and the glory
of God. Such an institution is now in operation. And you
are the Trustees of its future as well as its present life.
The principles therein in work have attracted the admiration
of all. The hills of San Germain are standing out on the
horizon of hope of the youth of Porto Rico, Santo Domingo
and the Virgin Islands.

You, as trustees, have the greatest opportunity for a
spectacular Christian statesmanship, which it quickly executed will electrify the highest sentiments and hopes of a whole continent. There is not a belly of trustees in America today who has such a clean-cut opportunity for the building of the Christian standard of education as you have. A thoroughly planned and well equipped college would be seen and felt all over Latin America, and bring a reflux blessing on Saxon America. A big undertaking by you will appeal to everybody. We are not building a school for San German, nor yet for the Antilles, though that in itself would be a large undertaking. Our work is much larger. It must be the redeeming of the finest type of Latin American and preparing him for the conquest of a continent for Christ and the Christian church.

The hour has struck for action. The people are awakening to higher roads than they can supply in their own countries. They are sending their youth to be educated in the state universities and they go back with all the vices of Saxon degeneration and atheism. Porto Rico is a thousand miles higher than any of the happy republics. The Porto Rican is a humble, industrious and honest people. Here are to be trained the leaders to set standards for a democratic Christian South America such as we know and love in our own country.

The physical plans for such an institution have been perfected by one of the best firms of architects of New York City, Stoughton and Stoughton. These two brothers have for years dedicated their study to college plans, having designed a large university for India and another for China. They claim that our campus lends itself best of any they have studied. They expect to make this the crowning work of their lives, both in artistic appearance and utility.

My brother, Mr. Chas. Harris, B. A., a master builder of theoretical and practical training, joins me in offering anew and unceasingly ourselves to Almighty God and to you, His servants, for the accomplishment of this work. The basic materials, soil and rock, are in abundance and cost only

the hauling and the quarrying. And no such as an ever increasing number of willing, strong and efficient body of students is doing a considerable amount of the construction, we have erected and are erecting buildings in first-class workmanship at a cost of one-half of their actual value.

It will take time to erect such an institution. It will take two and a half million dollars. We can safely count on an average of 200,000 annually from Porto Rican sources, that is, on at least 800,000 during twenty years. The definitely outlined growth for a number of years will appeal to men of large means and to foundations. The interest on 800,000 will go together with what Porto Rico would give would erect the Polytechnic Institute as planned within twenty years and leave the school with two millions for endowment and a $5,000,000 property. This carries its appeal because it is a common sense method that assures the creation of buildings and the perpetuation of the work of a great Christian school. It will sustain this institution for the benefitting of the best religious and civic principles into the lives of youths who in turn will go out to direct individuals and society toward the heights for which man was created.

With such an excellent Board of Trustees as this institution has to guarantee the right use of its funds, a larger sum will be as easily secured as a smaller amount. Let us, therefore, above for the larger sum and thus secure what one lecturer has sent to all churches in the United States in reference to the Polytechnic Institute buildings, "which when completed, will once more demonstrate Presbyterian sound wisdom and love of steadfastness."

John Williams Harris, President.