

# CURIOUS CUBAN REPORTS.

**Allegations of Corruption and Bribery in Washington—Congressmen and Newspaper Men Accused—How "Poor Cuba" Has Been Strangled—A Deep Laid Scheme Exposed.**

[Washington (June 6) correspondence of the Evening Post.]

For several months past reports have been in circulation that the Cuban leaders, in order to secure the recognition of the Cuban republic as a belligerent Power by the United States, have expended large sums of money with the lobby and newspaper correspondents here. These statements have been met with prompt denials by the friends of Cuba, who claimed that they were placed in circulation by those hostile to Cuban independence. But these rumors came from such sources as to entitle them to more weight than is generally attached to mere speculations, and in order to establish their truthfulness or falsity a sub-judiciary committee, with General Butler at its head, was given the necessary authority to make a thorough investigation.

This committee examined a large number of witnesses, and concluded its labors some time ago, but from some unexplained cause has not made any report to Congress on the subject. Although General Butler declines to make public the nature of the evidence obtained by his investigation, your correspondent has come into possession of facts of an official character bearing upon and relating directly to this subject, and these establish beyond doubt that there has been a large and powerful lobby at work for the purpose of bribing Senators and members, and to induce the President and his Cabinet to recognize the belligerency of the Cuban republic.

It appears that as early as September last Mr. Ruiz, the financial agent of Cuba in Washington, entered into a written contract with N. B. Taylor, an ex-army contractor, through his attorney, ex-rebel General Pickett, of this city, by which, for the sum of \$1,000,000 in Cuban bonds, which were deposited with a certain foreign minister here, Taylor was to obtain the recognition of belligerent rights for Cuba by the government of the United States. The sum was to be used by Taylor in the best possible manner to accomplish this end within a specified time.

As soon as the contract was signed Taylor started out West to secure the services of a person—whose name is withheld for the present, and who was supposed to have great influence at the White House—and to induce him to come to Washington and urge President Grant to recognize the Cubans as belligerents. This gentleman, however, emphatically declined to have anything to do with the matter, although he was offered \$100,000 for his influence.

Being unsuccessful, Taylor returned to Washington to bring other influence to bear upon the President, and soon entered into a contract with a Mr. P., who was on intimate terms with ex-Senator Wade, in the sum of \$200,000, to secure the influence of Mr. Wade and Senator Morton. The agreement was acknowledged before David H. Smith, a justice of the peace of the city of Washington. At this time ex-Senator Wade was not in the city, but he was sent for and in a few days arrived.

In the meantime Mr. P. saw Senator Morton, and soon after sent his friend Luther B. Wilson to talk with Mr. Morton about the matter.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. P. were in close consultation every day, and Mr. P. reported at first that Messrs. Wade and Morton would see the President and endeavor to influence him to extend the Cuban belligerent rights.

About the end of November Mr. P. reported that Senator Morton had drawn up a proclamation recognizing the Cubans as belligerents, which he had taken to the President to sign. The President had, however, declined to sign it, as it was antagonistic to the policy which the administration expected to follow.

It was about this time that the Cubans caused to be published a positive announcement that the President would recognize them as belligerents, which was based no doubt upon the supposition that he would follow the advice of Senator Morton and Mr. Wade.

Previous to these movements, however, Mr. Taylor had deemed it necessary to secure the aid of certain correspondents in creating public opinion, and so in October had had a talk with a Mr. Latham, who was mixed up in the Alaska investigation, with the correspondent of the New York Sun and Philadelphia Inquirer, and who is also law partner of Colonel Pickett, Mr. Taylor's own attorney. Mr. Taylor told Mr. Latham to promise Cuban bonds, inside of \$50,000 in all, to various newspaper correspondents in Washington if they would write up the Cuban cause and advocate the early recognition of the republic of Cuba.

Mr. Latham told Mr. Taylor afterwards that he had promised certain of these bonds, but that it would be much better to pay actual money to the correspondents, or, if this could not be done, to obtain from Ruiz the release of some bonds, and give them directly and unconditionally to the correspondents. As soon as Congress assembled in December Mr. Ruiz so far modified his contract with Mr. Taylor as to agree to furnish him with from thirty to forty thousand dollars in money, to be used immediately with the members of Congress.

Mr. Taylor then went to work to induce members of Congress to vote for recognition, if that question should be brought before the house, and to work in a general way for the Cuban republic in all matters which might come up. He saw many members for this purpose, and among others Golladay, of Kentucky; Butler, of Tennessee; Dewcose, of North Carolina; Fitch, of Nevada, and McCormick, of Missouri; but it is not known positively who accepted bribes and who did not. It is conclusive, however, that bribes were tendered.

Towards the close of December Mr. Taylor became dissatisfied with his contract and went to see Mr. Ruiz, with whom he insisted that both bonds and money should be given to him directly to use with Congressmen, and not be kept in the hands of a third person until the recognition of Cuba was accomplished. This Mr. Ruiz promised to do, but not immediately.

About the end of January Mr. Taylor wrote to Mr. Ruiz, declining to have anything further to do with the matter, assigning as a reason that no money or bonds, as promised, had been furnished him.

Before this period, however, Mr. Lemus, the envoy from the Cuban republic, had made another contract with Dr. D. W. Bliss, of this city. This contract provided that \$2,000,000 of Cuban bonds should be deposited with some bank or depository by Mr. Lemus, and which should be paid over to Dr. Bliss if Congress should pass the resolution recognizing the belligerent rights of Cuba, or any other resolution which should modify the neutrality laws of the United States so as to practically give to Cuba belligerent rights.

The consideration of this agreement on the part of Dr. Bliss was that he should use all the means in his power to accomplish the desired result. The \$2,000,000 was deposited with the Safe Deposit Company of Washington, by Mr. Fessar, the treasurer of the Cuban Junta in New York, Dr. Bliss signing with him on the register book, in order to prevent the withdrawal of the bonds by one party without the consent of the other.

Dr. Bliss then made arrangements with several well known lobbyists to assist him in getting Congress to pass the desired resolution, and among those employed were Luther B. Wilson, Wells J. Babcock, George H. Pennfield and Isaac L. Gibbs, whom Johnson when President appointed Governor of Idaho Territory. These persons went to work industriously among the members to secure the success of the measure, in which they were greatly interested.

Senator Morton introduced in the Senate a bill modifying the neutrality laws, and urged its consid-

eration with great force; but when it was reported back to the Senate for action from the Committee on Foreign Relations, to which it had been referred, it was modified to such a degree as to be scarcely recognizable.

In the House several resolutions to aid the Cuban cause were introduced, but votes upon them were never obtained, and the lobby found the opposition much stronger than anticipated. Still they did not despair or abandon their work. A large quantity of pamphlets were distributed over the country favoring the speedy recognition of the Cubans, in which were enclosed blank petitions to be signed and sent to Congress, asking that body, by appropriate legislation, to render the Cubans this important service.

Thus the parties who had had this contingent interest in the Cuban bonds, by the aid of a few purchased correspondents here, created a fictitious feeling throughout the United States. The exact amount of the bonds distributed among these correspondents is not known, but it is estimated at \$100,000. The correspondent of the Philadelphia Press alone received more than \$20,000, and the correspondents of two other Philadelphia papers and of one Boston paper received large sums.

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