

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF EDUCATION FOR PORTO RICO
TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
INTERIOR, U. S. A., 1902, PP. 1-181**

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PUERTO RICO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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OFFICE FORCE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION FOR PORTO RICO

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1902.

WASHINGTON:
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REPORT

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COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION FOR PORTO RICO.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF PORTO RICO,
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER,
San Juan, November 4, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith my report on education in Porto Rico during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1902.

This report is prepared in pursuance of section 25 of the organic act; an act of Congress approved April 12, 1900; and in pursuance of section 139 of the Political Code of Porto Rico, approved March 1, 1902, which provides that—

The commissioner of education shall, on or before the first day of October of each year, transmit to the governor a full report of the operations of his department, of all expenditures made therein, together with such statements, facts, and explanations concerning the educational system of the island as he may deem appropriate.

This report is also prepared in response to a request contained in the following letter from the Hon. E. A. Hitchcock, and the statistical matter is presented in conformity with the suggestions therein contained:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, July 7, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to invite your attention to section 25 of the act of Congress approved April 12, 1900 (31 Stats., 77), entitled "An act to provide revenues and a civil government for Porto Rico, and for other purposes," which provides as follows:

"That the commissioner of education shall superintend public instruction throughout Porto Rico, and all disbursements on account thereof must be approved by him; and he shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law, and make such reports through the governor as may be required by the Commissioner of Education of the United States, which shall annually be transmitted to Congress."

I have to request that you will cause this matter to be brought to the attention of the commissioner of education with request that he will prepare and forward, through you for my consideration, at a date not later than October 1, 1902, a report of the educational matters pertaining to Porto Rico with which he is charged under existing laws.

In addition to such matters as may be embodied by the commissioner of education in his report, it is desirable that he incorporate therein answers to the following questions, which correspond to questions annually propounded by the Bureau of Education of this Department to each State and Territorial superintendent of public instruction in the United States, to wit:

1. Number of pupils enrolled on the school register (excluding duplicates or re-enrollments):

White—	Colored—	White and colored—
Males	Males	Males
Females	Females	Females
Total	Total	Total

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2. Average daily attendance:		
White
Colored
Total		
3. Average number of days the public schools were kept.....		
4. Number of buildings used as schoolhouses (including buildings rented):		
For white schools.....	.....	.....
For colored schools .....	.....	.....
All .....	.....	.....
5. Estimated value of all public-school property..... \$.....		
6. Number of pupils enrolled in public high schools or studying high-school branches—i. e., pursuing such studies as algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, general history, Latin, and modern languages other than English and Spanish (included in answer to question).....		
7. Whole number of different teachers enrolled:		
White—	Colored—	White and colored—
Males	Males	Males
Females	Females	Females
Total	Total	Total
8. Average monthly salaries of teachers:		
White—	Colored:	White and colored:
Males	Males	Males
Females	Females	Females
Total	Total	Total
Average of all		
9. Receipts for the school year (1901-2):		
From interest of permanent school funds.....	\$.....	.....
From insular taxes (or appropriations).....	.....	.....
From local taxes (or appropriations).....	.....	.....
From sale of bonds.....	.....	.....
From all other sources.....	.....	.....
Total receipts for public moneys.....		
10. Expenditures for the school year (1901-2):		
For sites, buildings (including permanent repairs and alterations), furniture, libraries, and apparatus.....	.....	.....
For salaries of superintendent and teachers.....	.....	.....
Bonded indebtedness paid.....	.....	.....
All other expenses.....	.....	.....
Total expenditures of public school moneys		

The enumeration of the topics given above is not intended to exclude the presentation of other educational matters which may commend themselves to the commissioner in his report; on the contrary, the fullest information is desired.

It is desirable that the report of the commissioner of education of Porto Rico be submitted to the Department within the time above specified, in order that proper consideration may be given to the important subjects therein requiring attention in the annual report of the Secretary of the Interior to the President.

There is herewith transmitted for the information of the commissioner a copy of the annual report of the commissioner of education of Porto Rico for 1901, together with a copy of the last annual report of the Secretary of the Interior.

Very respectfully,

E. A. HITCHCOCK, *Secretary.*

THE GOVERNOR OF PORTO RICO,
San Juan, P. R.

I desire to call attention to the fact that my predecessor's report covering the first year of civil government is dated October 18, 1901, and while the statistical material therein contained is for the most part restricted to figures for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1901, the discussion of educational matters in Porto Rico extends beyond that period. It is brought down to the date at which the report apparently

was signed, namely, October 18, and includes some discussion of the plans for the equipment of schools, the securing of teachers, the training of Porto Rican teachers during the summer, and the opening of the schools at the beginning of the school year on September 30, 1901, and other matters pertinent to part of the fiscal year covered in the present report. I shall follow, in the main, the same plan, and while confining my statistics to the fiscal year ending June 30, 1902, I shall discuss in some measure the various topics herein treated as they have presented themselves during the twelve months from October 1, 1901, to October 1, 1902. I have already had the honor to present to your excellency a report covering part of this period. The school statistics included in that report covered only the first five months of the school year, and many other matters relating to the operations of this Department during the past school year can be much more fully treated at the present time.

At the outset I desire to express my high appreciation of the magnificent work already accomplished by my predecessor, Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh, of the University of Pennsylvania, who took charge of this department on August 6, 1900, as the first commissioner appointed under the organic act of Congress, and who resigned the commissioner-ship on February 8, 1902, the date on which I assumed charge of the department. It was an enormous task to create out of the chaos in matters of public instruction which the Spanish Government left, and out of the small beginnings in the direction of a public school system made by the military authorities of the United States during the period of military control, a splendid school system for a population of a million people, operating under a comprehensive and practical educational law prepared by the commissioner and enacted by the insular legislature. The creation of an enthusiasm for education on the part of the people which is almost without parallel, the erection of a large number of school buildings, the selection of modern school apparatus and school supplies, the enrollment at the beginning of the last school year of 32,302 children in 780 schools, and last, but not least, the organization of a department of government with an able and efficient office force consisting of 16 faithful employees, is a work which, taken as a whole and considered in the light of the difficulties attending all work of an administrative character in this climate, and so far from the base of supplies and the aid and stimulus which comes from similar or rival efforts in the States, constituted a stupendous task. It is a work which reflects upon Dr. Brumbaugh and upon those who were associated with him in the insular government the greatest credit, and deserves the thanks of the American people. It has placed his name high on the roll of public benefactors in Porto Rico, and it is a public service which the future historian of the United States will not fail to record.

In the brief period of my incumbency I have had frequent occasion to be thankful for the foundations that were laid, few of which have had to be changed in any material respect, as this work goes on and rapidly assumes larger proportions; and I have had equally frequent occasion to be grateful for the earnest support and discriminating advice of the governor of Porto Rico who has never failed to enter into all the plans of this department with the keenest interest in the educational progress and welfare of the people and with the most hearty response to every request for assistance that I have made.

Permit me also to say that the cordial sympathy of the heads of executive departments and the spirit of cooperation that has prevailed in all of our governmental duties have made easy many tasks that would otherwise have been arduous, and the responsiveness of the people generally to that which we have been trying to do in their interest has been such that the most difficult work has not been without its recompense.

I have the honor, sir, to be your obedient servant,

SAMUEL McCUNE LINDSAY,
Commissioner of Education.

Hon. WILLIAM H. HUNT,
Governor of Porto Rico.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Upon my arrival in Porto Rico, in February, 1902, I found a good American system of schools of primary, secondary, and grammar grades in every municipality on the island, one high school in San Juan, and a normal school at Rio Piedras for the training of teachers. These schools were in successful operation under a general school law enacted by the insular legislature, whose provisions were for the most part eminently wise and practical, and did not involve too great a departure from the local traditions of the past, but pointed unequivocally in the direction of the best achievements of the American free public school as we know it in the States. The elementary schools can not be compared, of course, in their everyday output of work with the best city schools of the same grade in the States, but the poorest schools here are fully as good, and in some respects better than the poorest of the same grade in very many parts of the United States. When contrasted with the schools which existed under the Spanish régime, which is the fairest means of comparison, and the one naturally employed by the Porto Rican people, the change is simply marvelous. The essential fact is that we have the American free public school in every municipality. The territory of the whole island was divided at that time into 66 legally constituted municipalities, which include urban and rural districts. These are grouped into 16 school districts, to one of which the neighboring islands of Vieques and Culebra are added. At the end of the last school year (June 21, 1901) we had 733 schools open, in which 33,802 pupils were enrolled, with 768 teachers, which was an increase for that year of 20 per cent in the number of schools, 37 per cent in the number of pupils enrolled, and 21.5 per cent in the number of teachers. The scholastic year 1901-2 began on September 30, 1901, with 780 schools open, 32,302 pupils enrolled, and 829 teachers; and the school year closed June 20, 1902, with 874 schools open, 40,993 pupils enrolled, and 923 teachers employed, which, compared with the previous year, shows an increase of 19.2 per cent in the number of schools open, an increase of 21.2 per cent in the number of pupils enrolled, and of 20.2 per cent in the number of teachers employed. These figures do not represent the highest mark reached during the year, because the month of June comes in the rainy season and some rural schools were closed. The months of March, April, and May show a larger number of schools