

are them. One of the most serious objections I have to the bill is the proposal to have one Colonial Council for the two islands. Such a proposal, if adopted, would deprive the best brains of this island of an opportunity to participate in the political affairs of this island. In my earnest opinion the frame work and foundation of this Senate Bill is so poor that no amendment could be made to it. I recommend the resolution to the favorable consideration of members.

3rd Appointed Member for St. Thomas (Nolte) remarked: Mr. Chairman. Probably enough has been said that we may bring this meeting to a close. As a matter of fact things have taken a different turn. I thought we have assembled here to discuss a resolution and not to make amendment to Senate Bill No. 2786. It seems to me that if it does not lack in brain it is lacking in adaptability. As to the secrecy concerning the bill that has been explained, but I have a suspicion myself. This bill has been the result of false pretences and propaganda work. The bill is lacking in its framework, so much so that it cannot be amended. We are here to adopt a resolution and not to make corrections in a Senate bill. The question is whether it should be countenanced or not. Not only that it does not suit us, but it has not been carried through the right way. To my mind it will do us the greatest harm in the world. We can hardly amend it as it is. We want the people who think they are doing us a favor to know that they are doing us a harm. It is saying a great deal to say that the seven years of American occupation of these islands have been wasted. I don't think anyone can justly say that these islands have retrograded under the present Government. Mr. Chairman: I now move that this resolution, moved by thirteen members of the Colonial Council of St. Thomas and St. John and the majority of the members of the Colonial Council of St. Croix be adopted.

The Chairman remarked: In the first place some members of the St. Thomas and St. John Council have already signified to me that they have some minor changes to make to the resolution. For the purpose of bringing the views of both Councils into harmony upon the bill I will give a recess after which a committee will be appointed to receive and report on the resolution, but before doing so I will read a communication received from the 2nd Elected Member for St. Thomas. The Chairman read the communication, which is as follows:

St. Thomas, 3rd April 1924.

The Honorable Chairman
of the Colonial Council for
St. Thomas and St. John
St. Thomas.

Dear Sir,

Whilst I do not see the necessity of passing the within Resolution in a

joint meeting of the two councils, and would have preferred that the Resolution had been passed separately by the respective Councils, I beg to state that I heartily agree with, and approve of same.

Yours faithfully,

AXEL HOLST.

2nd Appointed Member for St. Croix (Noll) remarked: Mr. Chairman. Before taking a recess I would ask for the word.

The Chairman signified his consent.

2nd Appointed Member for St. Croix (Noll) I feel it incumbent upon me to state where I stand, not particularly as a Member of this Council or as a resident of this island, but as an American citizen, and for the sake of having something on record.

Now, then, we are met here today not for the purpose of discussing the merits or demerits of a bill introduced in the Senate by Senator McLean. We are met here for the purpose of discussing a resolution and nothing else; but unfortunately the resolution is so mixed up with the bill that it is hard to discuss one without the other. I do not know Senator McLean, be he a Democrat or Republican. I doubt that when he knows the facts as they exist down here he will not say that he is not interested in the bill. True Senator McLean did introduce the bill, but I hold here in my hand papers showing the person who requested the introduction of the bill. The Speaker then read the following:

"Virgin Islands Committee, 70 Fifth Avenue, N. Y.

Dear Friend. The enclosed is an appeal that should receive your immediate attention by sending a contribution to 70 Fifth Avenue. We have just entered a bill in the Congress for a civil form of government in the islands. We need funds to push this drive. Will you help? Thank you.

Respectfully,

ROTHSCHILD FRANCIS.

and continuing said,—Now gentlemen, does that say that Senator McLean introduced a bill in the Senate of the United States asking for a civil form of Government for the Virgin Islands? This is signed by Rothschild Francis, Chairman of the Executive Committee. It is clear that all Senator McLean did is what any other Senator would do. Namely, put the bill before the Senate for its consideration. I also have in my hand some cards, among them being: The Member read the following:

"West 139 Street, near 8th Avenue.

A Monster Mass Meeting to petition Congress for remedial legislation for the Virgin Islands. You are politely requested to attend. Help a just cause,

continuing the Speaker said,—This man gained the confidence of a Senator of the United States and got him to introduce

this bill, and when an investigation was made we found the source, and we found that it is rotten; we have found the weak steel structure, and we do not care to build upon it.

Gentlemen, are we going to stand for this. I would rather go down in defeat than to submit to something that has been secretly thrust upon us as this Senate Bill has been. The bill which is now before the Senate did not emanate from us; and that's why I say let us proceed by a resolution. The merits or demerits of the resolution have not been discussed here much; the first three paragraphs of it relate to the source. I don't think it needs argument to know that the bill was placed into the hands of Senator McLean by self-constituted parties. The resolution which is now before the House does not say that the Colonial Council of St. Croix or the Colonial Council of St. Thomas and St. John or any member disagrees with the idea of having civil government for these islands. I have been a staunch supporter of civil government, and I feel that when the time comes we will have it. But the time has not yet arrived.

In bringing into the Union of the United States some thirty-seven states, so far as I have studied, every constitutional state sent its proposed enabling act to Congress and it kept on going back and forth until it was satisfactory.

It may be considered absurd to ask Congress to send the bill here to us before taking action upon it. Legally it is not binding upon Congress to do so, but morally it is binding on them to do so.

What we are up against is, Congress is not studying all the local laws down here. That's the reason why I ask that we draw their attention to them. I admit that Congress has acted without our consent, but I also admit that Congress has not done so intentionally.

As to the last paragraph of the resolution the Member is trying to put sugar in vinegar to make it sweet. He is trying to build on a weak structure.

It would be far from democracy for any one to say I will snap this over you, so amend it quickly. Are we going to do it? No, we are going to vote for a resolution. If any one wishes to advocate a civil government for these islands I think there is ample time to frame a bill that will be suitable to local conditions.

8th Elected Member for St. Thomas (Rothschild Francis) remarked: Mr. Chairman. The Honorable 2nd Appointed Member for St. Croix, an able Lawyer, an able speaker, has made his appeal to the House. He has accused the Virgin Islands Committee. That Committee consists of four hundred Americans and Virgin Islanders. He speaks of territories, here is history: One year after Porto Rico became a possession of the United States, although the people