

Mails Close

for the United States, Europe and other places via New York, by s. s. Guiana on Thursday, 8th instant, at 4 o'clock p. m.

LOCAL

The s. s. Guiana for New York is due at Frederiksted at 6 o'clock on Friday morning.

$\frac{1}{4}$ of a line of rain was measured at the Fort this morning and $1\frac{1}{2}$ at Frederiksted.

MERCURY TO CROSS SUN'S DISC MAY 7.

Mercury, smallest of the planets, is due to pass between the earth and sun on May 7.

The transit will take place in the late afternoon. It will be partly visible in Boston and the eastern part of the United States. Mercury when in transit will appear as a round black dot on the face of the sun. — *Boston American*, 20th April.

A DANGEROUS BILL

(Ottumwa Courier)

The Senate's committee on territorial affairs has voted favorably on the bill providing that after 1932 Porto Rico shall have the right to elect its own governor and the insular legislature the right to impeach. In effect this bill would grant the petition of the unionist party in Porto Rico which is in the majority at present. There is ample reason for regarding the proposed step as an unwise one, involving a serious risk not only for Porto Rico but for the United States Government itself.

Porto Rico has a territorial form of government now. The governor is appointed by the president of the United States; so are some of the other major officials, including the attorney general. The members of the law-making body and several other minor officials are elected. The municipalities have home rule.

There is a high percentage of illiteracy in Porto Rico. It is being reduced gradually by the American Government. It cannot be brought to the point at which intelligent self government will be practicable in Porto Rico for many years. The eight-year interim contemplated by the proposed legislation is far too short.

Porto Rico's population is largely of African blood. There is a Spanish strain also. There are few Americans on the island. Since the United States acquired Porto Rico, following the Spanish-American war, it has enjoyed progress which cannot be described in mere words. This is the testimony of responsible American

citizens who have known Porto Rico for a quarter of a century.

San Juan, the capital, is the most modern and advanced city in the West Indies with the possible exception of Havana. American and foreign money is being invested there; building operations are active; business is on a sound basis. These things are true because investors have confidence in Porto Rico with America standing sponsor. Just so long as the United States government retains its present grasp upon governmental affairs in Porto Rico, relinquishing its grip by not the slightest degree, progress can continue on a sound basis and investments will be safe. That safety will disappear just as rapidly as American control is lessened, and in the same degree.

The American flag floats over Porto Rico, but an alien language is spoken there. The children in the schools sing "America," but they have little conception of its meaning. The natives in the mountains know nothing about government; patriotism is, for them, an unexplored and undiscovered mystery.

In the municipal governments of Porto Rico, where the educated few have an opportunity to exploit the ignorant, illiterate many, graft reigns supreme. The insular legislature is by no means free from taint; the courts are far from incorruptible. Patriotism and respect for constitutional government, as abstract but real impulses, are little known in Porto Rico, even among the educated natives.

It is America's duty to save such a people from itself; or more properly, to save the helpless many from exploitation by the enlightened few.

No government which depends for its strength upon the suffrage of the people can be stable unless the people are enlightened and patriotic. They cannot be patriotic without education and enlightenment; they can be educated and enlightened without embracing patriotism. Until education and enlightenment have had their way for several generations in Porto Rico, the people will not be capable of self government. America is learning that self government is the weightiest responsibility the Creator has given to His children. — *Porto Rico Progress* April 26th.

TELEGRAMS.

ST. CROIX STATION.

Geneva, May 2nd.—The League of Nations has officially announced the convocation for September 1st, in Geneva.

London, May 2nd.—The Japanese Admiralty recently bought from the German naval designer Prof. Oswald Eram, his plans for a giant submersible cruiser, according to a report quoted by the diplomatic correspondent of the Daily Telegraph. The writer adds that Japan is believed already to have ordered the building of one of these cruisers of about 4,500 tons.

Croydon, Eng., May 2nd.—The strike of the pilots and mechanics employed by the combine which handles the air mails was settled today and the men will resume work on Monday. The strike began on March 31st.

Berlin, May 2nd.—Atheism is on the decline in Berlin, according to Professor Schmidt of the Protestant High Church Council. In 1922 he said 20,000 persons who had surrendered their membership and became atheists were received back into the church. There was a similar movement last year and the prospects for the church are extremely bright. Clergymen of all sects report a wide revival of religious activities in Berlin, with larger attendance at all services.

Atlanta, Ga., May 2nd.—A revised check of the regions stricken in several South-eastern States by violent wind storms, placed the total known dead at 109, more than 500 injured, scores homeless and estimated property damage of more than \$10,000,000.

London, May 2nd.—In the course of a speech at a great gathering of the Primrose League, the Conservative Organization, Marquis Curzon gave his first view of the Labour Government and incidentally predicted that the Conservative banner would before long be again floating high in the sky. He asserted that the Conservative Party was preparing itself "with all the energy in our power for the renewed struggle that cannot long be delayed". Regarding the Labour Government, Lord Curzon said: "There is a government in power which has only conformed to its title insofar as it is labouring in very deep water. The Socialist Government was going to give us the pure milk of Socialism, but so far the cow has not provided much beverage. In foreign affairs the only thing the Government has done has been to sit in a friendly conference with representatives of the most cruel and bloody government that Europe has known since the French Revolution". Mr. Baldwin outlining the policy of the Conservatives, said the party was ready to enter into any conference to consider limitation of armaments, but we cannot allow any weakening of the defence forces. The Conservatives he said, stood for strict carrying out of the treaties of peace and would make the League of Nations the pivotal factor of their policy. He said that they stood for unity of the Empire and of the people at home and regretted that their modest scheme of preference with the Dominions had not been accepted. The ex-Premier expressed the fear that the inevitable result of the rejection of imperial preference would attract the Dominions into other economic orbits. Regarding the tariff, Mr Baldwin declared: "We accept the verdict of the country and do not propose to put forward a general tariff, but we propose when we return