

THE CUBAN CONVENTION

Delegates Meet to Frame a Constitution for the Island.

GEN. WOOD OPENS MEETING

Resolutions of Thanks to the Governor General and Gratitude to President McKinley Presented.

HAVANA, Nov. 5.—The Cuban Constitutional Convention met in the Marti Theatre this afternoon at 2 o'clock. Long before that hour the theatre was crowded. Many thousands were unable to gain admittance, and the streets in the neighborhood were blocked with people.

Governor General Wood and his staff, accompanied by Gen. Fitzhugh Lee and his staff, received an ovation on entering, the band playing "America." Señor Cisneros and Gen. Rivera escorted Gen. Wood to the platform, and he almost immediately opened the convention.

"As Military Governor of the Island of Cuba, and representing the President of the United States," he said, "I call this convention to order. It will be your duty first of all to frame and adopt a Constitution for Cuba, and, when that has been done, to formulate what in your opinion ought to be the relations between Cuba and the United States.

"The Constitution must be adequate to secure stable, orderly, and free government. When you have formulated the relations which, in your opinion, ought to exist between Cuba and the United States, the Government of the United States will doubtless take such action on its part as shall lead to a final and authoritative agreement between the people of the two countries to the promotion of their common interests.

"All friends of Cuba will follow your deliberations with the deepest interest, earnestly desiring that you shall reach just conclusions and that by the dignity, individual self-restraint, and wise conservatism which shall characterize your proceedings the capacity of the Cuban people for representative government may be signally illustrated.

"The fundamental distinction between true representative government and a dictatorship is that in the former every representative of the people, in whatever office, confines himself strictly within the limits of his defined powers. Without such restraint there cannot be free constitutional government.

"Under the order pursuant to which you have been elected and convened you have no duty and no authority to take part in the present government of the island. Your powers are strictly limited by the terms of that order."

Before withdrawing Gen. Wood wished the delegates a speedy and successful conclusion of their work. He said that Chief Justice Perez would administer the form of oath which the delegates might select, and he concluded by appointing Señor Figueroa as temporary Chairman.

The convention organized with Señor Llorente, Justice of the Supreme Court, as President, and Señor Villuendo as Secretary. The following oath was then administered:

"We, delegates elected by the people of Cuba to the National Constitutional Convention, swear faithfully to fulfill the duties of our office. We publicly and solemnly renounce allegiance to or compact made with any State or nation, whether made directly or indirectly, swearing to the sovereignty of the free and independent people of Cuba and swearing to respect the solution this convention may adopt, as well as the Government established by the Constitution."

All of the thirty-one delegates were present. Señor Aleman, who said that the convention was "only a continuation of the fight for independence," moved that the regulations governing the old Cuban Assembly at Yaya in 1896 be adopted. As nobody seemed familiar with them, the convention adjourned until to-morrow at 2 P. M., when copies will be furnished to the delegates.

The following resolutions were presented to the President of the convention just before adjournment, and will probably be adopted to-morrow. They were signed by a majority of the delegates as seconders:

"The undersigned delegates propose that the Constitutional Assembly adopt the following resolutions:

"First—That a committee of the assembly proceed immediately to call on Gen. Wood and manifest the satisfaction with which the delegates have seen him carry out the difficult mission intrusted to him.

"Second—That the committee request Gen. Wood to cable to the President of the United States as follows:

"The delegates elected to the Constitutional Convention assembled at their inaugural meeting, greet with profound gratitude and affection the President of the United States of North America, and they are satisfied with the honesty demonstrated in the fulfillment of the declarations made in favor of liberty and the independence of the Cuban people."

AMERICAN OFFICER'S OPINION.

Lieut. J. H. Griffiths Says Anti-Imperialists at Home Cause Continued

Trouble in Philippines.

L. Stargardter of Brooklyn has received a letter dated San Mateo, Sept. 19, from First Lieut. J. H. Griffiths of the Twenty-seventh Infantry, now in the Philippines. The writer says:

"In the last four days we have had brushes between troops of our regiment and the Filipinos almost every day, in one of which artillery was used on both sides. We had one killed and two wounded, while the enemy fared much worse. We took no prisoners.

"In one bunch, into which 150 of our men ran, there were 1,300, all armed and with a complete organization. Our troops surprised them, and this outfit at least will need some reorganization, as they were completely smashed and pursued for some miles. This fight occurred in a place where the grass was breast high, and, as one of the officers described it, it was like hunting rabbits. The men went through the grass and kicked them out.

"We have absolutely no respect for them in any way; they will lie, steal, stab you in the back, but will not stand up and fight. One good solution of the trouble would be to turn loose about 3,000 American Indians here.

"The great trouble breeders are the race of Tagais, the others being as a rule well disposed toward American rule. We are out after them whenever we hear of any anywhere. The trouble is to get near enough to touch them up. You see, they have friends in all the towns, and they are promptly informed of all movements of troops, but we manage to bury a few once in a while.

"All this trouble is caused by a few Americans at home, who by their acts and so-called sympathy have caused these people to think that the large body of American people do not want to hold these islands, (which, if they were repopulated would be a paradise,) and that Bryan would be elected and the islands abandoned. We have captured autograph letters from Americans (?) urging these people to keep up the warfare, and they would soon be recognized. Every American life that has been lost here and all the suffering that has occurred is directly chargeable to these people at home."