

(Extract from letter dated San Juan, March 5, 1901, from the)
(Right Reverend George W. Peteskin, D.D., to the Presiding Bishop)

The question of the church property at Ponce, I found not so complicated as I had expected. I have read the whole official record of the parish, and am also advised of the letters of the Bishop of Antigua on the subject. It seems that when the Church came to be consecrated in 1874, that an unprovided balance of \$500 was made up by the Bishop as a grant from the S.P.C. This money, however, as the records show, was given unconditionally to the congregation, who placed themselves at that time under the care of said Bishop. The original congregation to whom the grant was made still exists to enjoy, and does enjoy the use of the gift, and there has been no diversion in any way from the designs and purposes of the donors. The congregation owns the lot, and this would certainly, after twenty-six years of use, if not immediately, carry the church building with it. When to this you add the fact, already noted, that there were no conditions coupled with the gift, and that the church is still used by the congregation according to the original purpose of the gift, there does not appear to be any claim against the Church in the United States simply on the ground of transfer to its jurisdiction. The same Society that, through the Bishop of Antigua, made a grant of \$500 to the Church in Ponce, made also a grant of \$200 to the church in Vieques about 1880. So far, however, is the Church in the United States from being, in a financial way, a beneficiary, by taking from the English Church the care of Ponce and Vieques, that already the sum of \$2,000 has been raised for the repair

and maintenance of the Church in Ponce, and a further expenditure of perhaps \$2,000 a year will be needed to maintain services at these points, and to care for the disabled clergyman at Vieques, who comes to us at a time when his working days are practically over.....

..... The rector, (of Vieques) Rev. Jos. N. Bean, is a black man, a native of Bermuda, educated at St. Augustine's school, ordered Deacon by Bishop Lyman about 1890, and Priest by the Bishop of Antigua at a later date. Before his ordination Mr. Bean had been laboring for five or six years, i. e. from 1880 to 1886, as a layman in Vieques, and during that time collected quite a congregation. He seems to be a devout man, and ardently attached to the Church. He evidently has a strong hold upon his congregation, who number now perhaps seventy communicants, all colored. Before he lost his sight, some three years ago, he used to hold services at different plantations over the Island, and of course reached a great many more people than he can do now. At present he conducts the services from memory, and has the help of a reader who takes the Psalter and the Lessons. I understand that his evening services are especially well attended. Mr. Bean is a hale, hearty man 57 years of age. He has lost his sight entirely, and I should not think there was any prospect of his recovery. Under these circumstances he comes to us practically as a disabled man, although he is still holding services regularly. He feels himself that the work ought to pass into other hands, and that he himself should have a pension. Mr. Bean feels that a white man can do better services in Vieques than a colored man, having better promise of reaching all classes in the community. It seems to me that since Mr. Bean comes to us with the work which he inaugurated, and with which he has been so

long a time identified, that he ought to be provided for like any other disabled clergyman. Some years ago his congregation promised him a salary of \$400, but from all I can learn that was far beyond their strength; they have paid him, on an average, \$60 or \$70 per annum, and he meantime has gotten a little help-- not so much as \$100 a year-- from friends in the West Indies and the United States. I do not believe that his services would attract the population beyond the circle of the West India blacks who have immigrated to the Island during the past twenty or twenty-five years, and are attached to the Church and to Mr. Bean. Still, it must be remembered that he has this congregation of about seventy communicants., and holds them together, and we have nobody, at present, to take his place. It seems to me therefore, wise and just that for the present-- although so disabled-- he should go upon our active list of missionaries, and that we should try to find a man to take up this work, and perhaps extend it to several places on the main Island, having in view the Spanish-speaking people, Porto Ricans and others, as well as the West India colored, English speaking people, who now compose the congregation. Mr. Bean owns the house he lives in, his people may be able to pay him \$75, and to this I have assigned a stipend at the rate of \$200 per annum, but making the appropriation only for a year, or until such time as ~~xxx~~ a Bishop shall assume permanent charge of Porto Rico. I think the way will then be open for him to be retired, at about the same figure, and we can then secure some one to take up this particular work, of which I feel that something more can be expected, and also, perhaps to look after the Eastern part of the main island, where there may be one or two points, which would promise good

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results to judicious efforts. I have stated to Mr. Bean very clearly the provisional nature of this arrangement, and though the compensation proffered may seem very small, yet I doubt not that he will, under the circumstances, be in a better condition than he has been for years. If the Board feels itself able to do more, I should be glad, but I have thought it would be a pity to excite unreasonable expectations in Mr. Bean's mind, and thus prevent the retirement, which the best interests of the Church require, and to which his own judgment assents, at as early a day as may be..... This then, would seem to be the next thing for us to do, after so happily filling the vacancy at San Juan, (Van Buren) to retire Mr. Bean and put a vigorous and aggressive English and Spanish speaking clergyman in his place.