

A LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

MANILA, *January 23, 1920.*

MY DEAR MR. MADRIGAL: It gives me much pleasure to receive your kind letter of January 14th, inviting me to contribute a short article to the Yearbook of the Chamber of Commerce for 1920.

This yearbook will be of great service in disseminating information regarding our commercial and industrial development and in stimulating both the people of the Philippine Islands and foreign capital to greater recognition of our wonderful natural resources here.

The figures for foreign trade in the last three or four years must sound almost like a dream to those who were engaged in business here a decade ago. The present prosperity of the Philippines has brought abundant happiness to the people and is gradually arousing in the people of other lands a proper recognition of your important position in the world. I am very glad to note that American capital is taking an increasingly larger interest in Philippine development, and I join with you in the hope that it may be encouraged to come here for the general good of all. I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of outside capital for our development. Even the United States, through all of the past century of marvelous development, had to rely largely on European capital for the building of its railways and other works of public interest; here in the Philippines we were forced, by war conditions, to attempt to meet some of our requirements from our own capital. While it is undoubtedly desirable that the people of the Philippines should invest their earnings and savings in the development of their own country, we have found that we cannot do it all here ourselves—we must have help from elsewhere; and where could that come from more naturally and beneficially than from the United States?

Many American business men with whom I have talked in the last year or two emphasized the advantage to American commerce of having Manila as a distributing center of American trade for the Orient, and all of us who are interested in the growth and prosperity of this country should join together in earnest endeavor to that end. The Philippine Government is intensely interested in the business, industrial, and commercial expansion of the country and is doing all that it can to further this great idea. During the lean years, when private capital was not in the flourishing condition of to-day, the Government was forced to organize and engage in lines of enterprise which it would have preferred to see handled and developed by private capital. The Government has done its best at many a crisis in recent years to stimulate and encourage enterprise, but the fundamental principles of economics must not be disregarded that the best commercial development of a country, as well as industrial, is through private initiative and capital.

I wish, therefore, for the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands continued success in its work and renewed efforts on the part of the members to meet the great opportunities about to come. I, for one, believe that a trade expansion and industrial development is now beginning here far beyond the realization of most of us, and I sincerely hope that the Filipinos themselves will have their full share in this great opportunity. It is true that some of our most valuable public officials are leaving the service to enter into private business, but I am firmly convinced that the Filipino people must gradually secure their share of opportunity and of responsibility in commercial and industrial, as well as in political, institutions.

Yours very cordially,

Francis Burton Harrison
Governor-General.

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