



1920

## Chamber Declares For Permanent Organized Territory

By unanimous vote, the Active and Associate members of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands on Wednesday, November 14, at a regular semi-monthly meeting of members at the Chamber's quarters passed resolutions calling upon Congress to revoke the Jones Bill and enact in its place an enabling act establishing the Philippines as a permanent organized territory of the United States, and instructing the Board of Directors to formulate such an enabling act, subject to discussion by the Chamber membership; at large, embodying the Chamber's specific ideas on the subject.

### MEETING WELL ATTENDED

The meeting, which was well attended, was presided over by Acting President E. E. Elser, who delivered a short address setting forth the considerations that actuated the Directors in presenting the territorial government resolutions for the approval of the members. The following Active members were represented:

A. L. Ammen; Atkins, Kroll and Company; Benguet Consolidated Mining Company; S. M. Berger and Company; Clark and Company; Columbian Rope Company; El Dorado Oil Works; E. E. Elser; S. F. Gaches; Getz Brothers Company; Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company; Hale Shoe Company; Hanson and Orth; Herbert L. Heath; Kneidler Realty Company; Koster Company; Los Angeles-Pacific Navigation Company; Paul A. Meyer; W. J. Odom; Orient Trading Company; Philippine Acetylene Company; Philippine Manufacturing Company; Port Banga Lumber Company; Portland Cordage Company; Russell and Company; The Times Company; Tubbs Cordage Company; United States Shoe Company; Welch, Fairchild and Company.

### ELSER'S SPEECH

In presenting the territorial government resolution, Mr. Elser said:

### THE RESOLUTION

Whereas American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands in general meeting assembled, did upon August 14, 1920, adopt the following resolution:—

"Whereas the present status of the Philippine Islands is undesirable;

"Be it resolved by the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands that a territorial government under the sovereignty of the United States is desirable;" and

Whereas the political situation has grown steadily worse since that time, finally culminating in open opposition to the sovereignty of the United States, as well as open opposition to the representative of that sovereignty, the duly appointed Governor General of these Islands, and the public utterance of disloyal statements on the part of public officials and political leaders; therefore

Be it resolved that this Chamber of Commerce in general meeting does reiterate the resolution adopted upon August 14, 1920, and calls upon the Congress of the United States to pass legislation revoking the Jones Act (Act of Congress of August 22, 1916) and instituting in its place an enabling act establishing the Philippine Islands as an organized territory of the United States, and proclaiming in said act the permanency of said Philippine Islands as such organized territory under the sovereignty of the United States.

"Gentlemen: On August 14, 1920, when the political situation in this territory and particularly, perhaps, in Manila, sent of

the insular government, was seriously affecting American business, this Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution asking for the creation of the Philippines into an organized territory, a step which would—and will, when taken—make American sovereignty over this United States territory permanent. The energies of the Legislature, now so largely wasted in appeals to the Congress to do what that body has no power to do, viz., withdraw American sovereignty from this territory, could then be directed into channels proper to such a body.

"Much study has since been devoted to the fundamental laws affecting the Philippines, including the Jones law, or organic act, which is our present constitutional document; and we now know, and have a careful memorandum of, the laws and proclamations of local origin that conflict with this law—which is, in some of its phraseology, ambiguous—or that infringe upon its clear provisions. We know that there has been constant perverted effort by the Legislature, until two years ago aided by the Governor General, to create a government here of so-called parliamentary form—something that we also know now Congress never intended. We know these efforts were actually successful, until, in attempts to carry this subversive purpose still further and reduce the Governor General to a figurehead, the element responsible for the policy made a move (in the Council of State resignations, and the threat to the Governor General) disastrous to their cause.

"They made it necessary for the Governor General to redeem and exercise strictly much of his forfeited power; but this has been followed by the announced policy of non-cooperation, and the attack upon the Governor General, all upon false ground, made with the public in the United States and the administration in Washington.

## "Lest We Forget—Lest We Forget."

The following statement of "regulative principles" is from the first proclamation of the Special Commission sent to the Islands by President McKinley early in 1899:

1. The supremacy of the United States must and will be enforced throughout every part of the Archipelago, and those who resist it can accomplish no end other than their own ruin.
  2. To the Philippine people will be granted liberty and self-government reconcilable with maintenance of a wise, just, stable, effective, and economical administration of public affairs, and compatible with the sovereign and international rights and obligations of the United States.
  3. The civil rights of the Philippine people will be guaranteed and protected to the fullest extent; religious freedom will be assured, and all persons shall be equal and have equal standing in the eyes of the law.
  4. Honor, justice, and friendship forbid the use of the Philippine people or the islands they inhabit as an object or means of exploitation. The purpose of the American government is the welfare and advancement of the Philippine people.
  5. There shall be guaranteed to the Philippine people an honest and effective civil service, in which, to the fullest extent to which it is practicable, natives shall be employed.
  6. The collection and application of all taxes and other revenues will be placed upon a sound, economical basis, and the public funds, raised justly and collected honestly, will be applied only to defray the regular and proper expenses incurred by the establishment and maintenance of the Philippine government and such general improvements as the public interests may demand. Local funds collected will be used for local purposes, and not devoted to other ends. With such prudent and honest fiscal administration it is believed that the needs of the government will, in a short time, become compatible with a considerable reduction in taxation.
  7. A pure, speedy, and effective administration of justice will be established, whereby may be eradicated the evils arising from delay, corruption and exploitation.
  8. The construction of roads, railroads, and similar means of communication and transportation, and of other public works, manifestly to the advantage of the Philippine people, will be promoted.
  9. Domestic and foreign trade and commerce, agriculture, and other industrial pursuits tending toward the general development of the country in the interests of the inhabitants, shall be the objects of constant solicitude and fostering care.
  10. Effective provision will be made for the establishment of elementary schools, in which the children of the people may be educated, and appropriate facilities will be provided for a higher education.
  11. Reforms in all departments of the government, all branches of the public service and all corporations closely touching the common life of the people, will be undertaken without delay and effected conformably with right and justice in a way to satisfy the well-founded demands and the highest sentiments and aspirations of the people.
- Such is the spirit in which the United States comes to the people of the Islands, and the President has instructed the Commission to make this publicly known.
- In obeying his behest, the Commissioners desire to join the President in expressing their good will toward the Philippine people, and to extend to the leading representative men an invitation to meet them for the purpose of personal acquaintance and the exchange of views and opinions.

(Signed) JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN, U. S. Commissioner.  
GEORGE DEWEY, U. S. N.  
ELWELL S. OTIS, Major-General U. S. A.  
CHARLES DENBY, U. S. Commissioner.  
DEAN C. WORCESTER, U. S. Commissioner.

1899

# The Problem of Philippine Independence

By J. SIGAT FASSETT  
President, Inquirer Lumber Company

The problem of independence constitutes about as intricate a proposition as the attempted solution of Einstein's theory. It involves many factors and is full of disturbing possibilities, and yet it is a fascinating subject, especially to those of us who have cast our lot with the people of these islands. I am going to talk not as one who disbelieves in the possibilities of Malay development; not as one who would under any circumstances wish to run counter to McKinley's proposition that the Philippine Islands and the Filipinos were not under American domination, to be exploited either from within or from without. I would like to talk as one zealously devoted to proper relations between the hundred and ten millions of Americans and the eleven millions of Filipinos.

## FACING THE SITUATION

I would take as my slogan, to begin with, "interdependence rather than independence," because it seems to me that fate has woven a net of responsibilities around us from which we can not decently escape. Good government is what is desired, and what is desired here is the best obtainable government. A government that isn't good enough for the Americans in the Philippines isn't good enough for the Malays in the Philippines. What is not good enough for both is not good enough for either, and what we want to establish, or see established, is a government under which individual development can go on, under which personal rights may be safely guarded and under which property rights may be safeguarded and the progress of organized society be unimpeded by any malign force coming from any direction whatsoever.

Good government translates itself as good administration, sound regulations as

On Wednesday, February 28, Mr. Fassett delivered this address at the regular weekly luncheon of the Chamber. Through the courtesy of Mr. George H. Fairchild, who had a stenographic record made, we are able to reproduce the whole speech, which was considered by those present as one of the best ever delivered here on the subject of Philippine independence.

Mr. Fassett is an ex-member of Congress from New York and for eight years served in the New York State Senate, over which body he presided for three years. He has been District Attorney of New York, and in 1891, when he was Collector of the Port of New York; he was Republican candidate for governor of the Empire State. He was temporary chairman of the Republican National Convention in 1892 and has a nationwide reputation as a brilliant center and after-dinner speaker.

Mr. Fassett is vice president of the Second National Bank of Elmhurst, president of the Fassett Lumber Company; president of the Inquirer Lumber Company; president of the Fassett Lumber Company, Canada; controlling director of the Oriental Consolidated Mining Company, Korea; and a director in many other corporations.

to health and protection of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is demonstrated into low taxes, efficient public works,

ed by actual facts and not by rhetoric. The situation out here, it seems to me, requires an unflinching gaze into the face of facts and that we close our ears to rosy rhetoric.

In all the discussions which have taken place pro and con with reference to Philippine independence there stands out one astounding fact. No con, Filipino or American, has yet had the courage to reduce to utterance a plan, a system of means and appliances whereby the Filipino people can finance and maintain a stable government and a national existence as an independent integer. We have listened to a great deal of ardent oratory, both by those who wanted to keep the islands forever as they are, and again on the part of those who wanted immediate and complete separation.

The situation is fascinating to me, among other reasons for the following: These islands constitute a territory of fine lands, equal in extent to New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and West Virginia, all except a few square miles. If they were inhabited as densely as Java, they would maintain a population of a hundred million people. The United States, twenty-five years from now will not be exporting raw material. There may be one hundred and ninety million of people there then. They will need three billion dollars annually of tropical products. The Filipino people are only cultivating now a very small percentage of their very rich lands, hardly 10 per cent. Can you just close your eyes and get a vision of what may happen to the subsequent generations of Filipinos if a *modus vivendi* is found which will give them complete autonomy at home, in local affairs, under the strong protection of a nation like the United States? The world is going more and more to need the output of tropic

lands, and here is the largest uncultivated tropical area now in the world, open to development.

#### THE ALTERNATIVES

There are just three alternatives before us. One, that we continue as we are, and this was the recommendation, practically, of the exhaustive and very able Wood-Forbes report. There was no limit set as to the time of such a status except the limit set by the somewhat ambiguous phrase, "until the Philippines have thoroughly absorbed and mastered the opportunity for self government which they already enjoy under the Jones Act."

The second alternative is a still further modification of the existing dependency to protectorate.

The third alternative is an alternative which was expressed somewhat petulantly by Theodore Roosevelt a few months before his death, in a copy of *Everybody's Magazine*, in which he said he thought, after all, the Philippine Islands should be cast adrift "without any guarantee whatsoever, or without any strings whatsoever."

#### DEFINING TERMS

Now, it is to that alternative that I expect chiefly to address myself. To me there comes the advice that Cicero of old gave, that before we enter into a discussion it is always wise to have a definition of terms. What do we mean when we say "stable government" which the prelude to the Jones act refers to? That Act, by the way, was not passed by the deciding vote of a gentleman of Southern education and sympathies, Vice-President Marshall. A stable government? Well, I should say that a stable government is a government that is equally prepared to maintain peace, order and justice within, and to repel disturbance, disorder and intrusion from without. Mr. Jones, the author of the famous bill, when asked what he considered to be a stable government, by a gentleman whose handsome face I see before me, replied that his idea of a stable government was one that would last until we could get the Army and Navy out of the Islands. I am inclined to think that is the definition which a great many other individuals have had in mind.

Another term which is used quite freely is "self-determination" and "independence." What is meant by independence? If the Philippine people were the only people in the world they could be absolutely independent. If each one of you could be the only person in the world you could be absolutely independent. But independence ceases for a nation and for an individual where the rights of some other would-be independent nation or individual begin, and with each increase of nations and each increase of individuals, the term "independent" has less and less complete meaning. There is no such thing in this world as complete independence. It is a question of relations, or it is a question of elasticity. The Philippine people today enjoy more political privileges and commercial opportunities and social development than any other people in the wide world, with less cost per capita. They are today more independent than any territory of the United States ever was, and they are as independent in all essential respects as any one of the forty-eight states of the Union is today.

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

When, then, I read perfervid oratory which seems to intimate that the United States is holding these people back and restraining them, in an atmosphere which

does not give them full opportunities for self-development, I am troubled with the questions: What are we depriving them of? Of what do they wish to be independent? What opportunities for growth are they denied? What do they want independence from? What would they accomplish under their idea of independence that they can not accomplish, and are not already accomplishing, under conditions as they are?

I fear that in asking these questions I am throwing a searchlight upon motives which perhaps politeness requires that I do not too far pursue. It would be a pity to have the political destinies and the welfare of a present eleven million, and a future twenty-two or three or four million of succeeding Filipinos, and the political destinies and future of one hundred and ten millions of Americans and one hundred and ninety millions to be in a few years, made the opportunity for merely personal politics, made the football of personal ambitions. It seems to me that it is much more important to preserve under sound conditions the natural resources and opportunities of these Islands for future Filipinos than to please the entire body of those Filipinos who are so clamorous for independence. I say "clamorous" because clamor means a discordant noise, without harmony or rhyme or reason.

#### IMPOSSIBILITY OF COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

I am going to pass up possible modifications of the existing status with only a few comments. It is very possible that what these people really want, if they would only define it, is an opportunity to fill some of the more powerful offices, possibly the governorship and the vice-governorship and the Supreme Court, and complete control of all the legislation. In that event, provided the United States was still to retain its relation of political guardian and friend, it must never be forgotten that we can not assume responsibility for the Filipino people without commensurate power. We must have power commensurate to any responsibilities that we will undertake to assume for the future. That is almost a self-evident proposition, and I haven't the slightest doubt that our Filipino friends would accede to that as a matter of course.

Now, as to complete independence. It seems to me that there are several good, potent reasons why that is or should be an unthinkable proposition. Physically, there are eleven millions of people. Now they have free and unlimited access to the richest and friendliest market in the world. Access to that market conditions the present prosperity and the future prosperity of the Islands. If they are absolutely independent they become an independent nation, and can not continue to have free access to our markets, because of our treaties with other nations, some sixty or eighty of them. There is always a clause called the "most-favored nation" clause, and our Filipino friends would have to avail themselves at once only of such privileges as we give to the other favored nations, because if we continued to give the Philippines free access to our markets, we should have to give all the rest of the world free access to our markets. That would mean industrial suicide for us, which is precisely what complete separation would mean for these Islands.

#### NOT A RACIAL QUESTION

At present the per capita tax on the Philippine is not quite three gold dollars a year. The per capita tax on the people of the United States is not quite nine dollars gold. The per capita tax on the people of Great

Britain is not quite twenty-five dollars a year, and the per capita tax on the people of Japan is over six dollars a year, so the Filipino is the least taxed and the most highly favored citizen in the world today. One reason is that the United States Government pays for all the cost of the Army and Navy and the diplomatic and consular corps services, of which the Filipino may freely avail themselves. It seems to me that that should give those who are continually calling for independence, pause.

I want to say it is not because the Filipinos are mostly Malays that this condition of things is true, because if today there wasn't a Malay living in these Islands and these Islands were populated by eleven millions of the best disciplined and ablest Americans, they couldn't stand alone industrially. They couldn't stand the external pressure of competition with Java, India, the South American and the West Indies in all that the Islands could produce. It would be just as impossible for eleven million Americans to be an independent nation, protect themselves from within and without and conduct diplomatic and consular relations with the rest of the world successfully, as with the eleven million Malays. Absolute political independence in either case would result in industrial suicide.

#### SOME RETARDING FACTORS

Apart from that, what are the probabilities of their succeeding even reasonably well internally and politically? There is as yet no common language, and language is a tremendous cohesive power. There are something like eighty-three dialects spoken by something over forty different tribes, many of which have historical hatred for one another. They haven't yet learned to love one another and live together in peace and harmony, pursuing peacefully a common destiny. The schools are teaching English, not so well as they ought to teach it, but they are teaching English, and more and more children are coming under the cohesive power of the English language. As that language spreads further and further and becomes more and more in use, maybe in a few years or a few decades—for what is ten years or twenty-five years in the life of a nation—we might hope to see the cohesive power of a common language in these Islands. There are today eleven million people here. The entire circulation of every newspaper and periodical published in the Islands is not over two hundred thousand. Suppose five people read every copy of every newspaper or periodical published; still there would be ten people who do not read for every one who does. So there is not adequately informed public opinion in the Islands, no means of illuminating public opinion, and no way of expressing public opinion, which, as the world is growing older, is the great force which sweeps civilization forward or pulls it backward. At present public opinion moves from the top down in the Philippines and not from the masses upward.

These are all potent reasons, and they should be given deep consideration.

#### AGAINST SCUTTILING

Then the question would arise, how is this "complete separation" to be brought about? After all, the United States is the responsible authority. We hold these Islands by as good a title, gentlemen, as the Filipino themselves hold them. They conquered the original inhabitants. Spain came and dominated them; we came and dominated Spain and emancipated them, and we paid a handsome price to Spain.

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