

PHILIPPINE ISSUE EMPHASIZED

Governor Luke E. Wright, the present head of the Philippine commission, under the guise of an official report, sends a letter to the president which is intended for campaign use, and the president, of course, gives an extract to the public. The letter is unique—to use the word employed by the president to describe his feat when he shot the fleeing Spaniard. It is intended to suppress the discussion of the Philippine question in the United States and it contains some specimens of logic and political philosophy that ought to be embalmed for the benefit of future generations. The following is the extract which the republican presidential candidate thought proper to furnish the press:

The effect of the continued discussion of the capacity of the Filipino for self-government is having its effect here and makes our task more difficult than it otherwise would. The less a man is equipped with intelligence and those qualities which make him fit for good citizenship, more easily can he be persuaded that he is possessed of all these qualities.

These people have their full share of ambition and vanity and they also have their full share of recklessness. There is a number of half formed characters who are ready for intrigue in any direction which promises them profit or power. It is this class which has largely given force and direction to the Aglipayan movement and has recruited its ranks from ignorant and dangerous elements.

In this general connection I may say to you as a matter of information that the agitation in the United States for Filipino independence and the spoken and written utterances of the prominent men there who are urging it, are all brought here and published in the native newspapers and are being made text for editorials insisting that Philippine people are now ready to become independent.

The effect of all this is distinctly injurious. Its tendency is to renew the influence of the old insurrection leaders and make them active in preaching old propoganda. This, in turn, has the effect of demoralizing and weakening the more conservative and thoughtful Filipinos who fear that if they speak out as they really think, they would be considered enemies of their people and lose their prestige with them. Those of more prominence and best educated and who naturally have their ambitions are inclined to join in the general cry.

The purpose of the letter is evident—whether it was written at the suggestion of the president or was conceived by Governor Wright himself is a question upon which the public is not informed. In 1900, when the Filipinos were in arms against American rule the republican leaders charged that democratic speakers kept the war alive by holding out hope of independence. Now that there is "tranquility" in the islands democrats are accused of making "our task" (of governing the Filipinos against their will) more difficult. And why? Not because of the inborn love of liberty that always and everywhere resents an alien rule; oh, no; but because "These people have their full share of ambition and vanity," and because there are among the Filipinos a number of "half formed characters who are ready for intrigue in any direction which promises them profit or power." This is similar to the language employed in England and by colonial governors in 1776 to describe reckless and "half formed characters" like Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams and Thomas Jefferson, whose utterances demoralized and weakened the "more conservative and thoughtful" Americans who were holding office under the crown or who were made friendly to English rule by business relations with English houses. It seems, too, that in the Philippines today "The more prominent and best educated, who naturally have their ambitions, are inclined to join in the general cry" for independence, just as ambitious men like Washington and John Adams joined in the general cry for American independence. What a hard time we are going to have in the Philippines! The "prominent and best educated" are ambitious, the "conservative and thoughtful" are turned and easily scared while the "ignorant and dangerous elements" are ready for revolt! As the "prominent," the "best educated," the "conservative," the "thoughtful," the "ignorant" and the "dangerous" include pretty much the entire population, Governor Wright has nothing but the army to support the "tranquility," which prevails in the islands (among the office

holders). What a gloomy picture he presents of our happy insular possessions. We have spent some six hundred millions to make our dear subjects contented, while we have sent them but sixteen millions of merchandise (largely food and drink for our soldiers) and yet the mere discussion of their capacity for self-government seven thousands miles away completely upsets them—what ungrateful wretches they must be.

But the second sentence is the political, philosophical and literary gem of the letter. Governor Wright, having carefully studied the brown people over whom he is at present extending his benevolent sway and having diligently examined the characteristics of other races, comes to the profound conclusion that "Unless a man is equipped with intelligence and those qualities which make him fit for good citizenship, more easily can he be persuaded that he is possessed of all these qualities." What logic, what learning, what insight into human nature, what knowledge of the science of government are combined and condensed into that sentence! If he had not already had greatness thrust upon him by an imperial commission that assinine proposition ought to crown him with an infamous notoriety. If people can be persuaded of their fitness for self-government just in proportion as they are unfit for it, then it follows that those best fitted for self-government are hardest to convince of their own capacity. Those perfectly fitted for self government would, according to this logic, modestly refuse to believe themselves competent to govern themselves and would, therefore, insist upon being governed by others. If Governor Wright's reasoning is sound we will have to use the army to keep self-government away from the Filipinos while we deem them incapable of taking care of themselves and then we will have to use the army to force self-government upon them when we deem them fully qualified. Such are the inconsistencies to which the republicans are driven to excuse the inexcusable folly of colonialism—to defend the indefensible crime of imperialism!

When Governor Wright says that the "best educated" are "naturally ambitious" and that the least capable of self-government can most easily be convinced of their fitness he unconsciously corroborates the statement of Lincoln that God Himself, placed in every human heart the love of liberty, and all history proves that it is an unquenchable love. People differ in their average capacity for self government, just as individuals differ in the self-restraint which they are accustomed to employ, but to say that we are in duty bound to govern the Filipinos because we are more advanced than they, is hypocritical pretense—as opposed to our religious principles as to our theory of government. But what is to be the end of the policy suggested in Governor Wright's letter? Four years ago the republicans insisted that we must not promise independence because it encouraged the Filipinos to continue armed resistance to American authority; now the "continued discussion of the capacity of the Filipinos for self-government" makes "our task more difficult." But suppose we cease discussing the capacity of the Filipino and confine ourselves to the discussion of the capacity of our own people for self-government, will not such discussions be carried across the ocean and be published in the native newspapers and "be made texts for editorials"? Surely, the "more prominent" and the "best educated" of the Filipinos will see the analogy and apply to themselves the arguments which we use in regard to ourselves. What is the remedy then? Plainly, to stop talking about self-government or civil liberty. In 1900 the republican leaders succeeded in silencing some of the opponents of imperialism by accusing them of encouraging the "insurrectionists." If they can win this election by scaring some more they will be bolder by the next election and will object to our talking of our own rights and capacities. Governor Taft, after a few years' training in the Orient, was placed at the head of the war department where, in case of labor troubles, he can use his acquaintance with the arbitrary methods of imperial power, and it is only fair to assume that Governor Wright is, by his super-serviceable zeal, in the present campaign, laying the foundation for a cabinet position, but his successor, stimulated by his example, may feel justified in reporting, "as a matter of information," that the celebration of the Fourth of July in the United States and the praise of those who fought and died for independence "are all brought here and published in the native news-

papers and are being made the text for editorial insisting that the Philippine people are now ready to become independent."

There is but one settlement of the Philippine question which accords with American principles and that is the settlement proposed in the democratic platform and endorsed by Judge Parker. Independence, promised now and given as soon as a stable native government can be formed—this will settle the Philippine question as the Cuban question was settled and will convert into friends, admirers and imitators the Filipinos who are now enemies—whether they be "prominent," "educated," "conservative," thoughtful," "ignorant" or "dangerous."

Judge Parker's Letter.

Judge Parker's letter of acceptance is now before the public and it contrasts most favorably with President Roosevelt's letter. The judge's treatment of the subject of imperialism is strong and clear, his discussion of the tariff question forceful and his condemnation of militarism emphatic and statesmanlike.

He accepts the president's challenge and announces that he will, if elected, revoke the tampus pension order and then recommend the enactment of an old age pension law, and in answer to the president's demand that he name a specific expenditure that is too large he calls attention to the increase in the expenses of the war department from \$34,000,000 in 1886 to \$115,000,000 in 1904. He answers the president's argument against the employment of the common law against trusts by citing the case of the Western Union Telegraph company vs. the Call Publishing company, reported in 181 United States Reports, page 92. While he devotes considerable space to the tariff question he evidently regards imperialism as the paramount issue, connected as it is with the large army and with the president's reckless disregard for the tenets of executive authority. The democratic committee ought to send out both letters in one pamphlet. A reading of the two ought to convince anyone that Judge Parker is the better man to trust with the responsibilities of chief executive.

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