

Philippines Now Have Good Government



The Filipino Assembly



The Speaker

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—I want to tell you of Uncle Sam's work in the Philippine Islands. We have had possession of them for over twelve years and it is high time we were taking account of stock and knowing what has been done. They are, as you know, under the War Department, and the bureau of Insular Affairs is in constant communication with them by traveling officials and by letters and cablegrams, so that the exact situation can be at any time known. I have spent this week talking with General Clarence Edwards, the head of that bureau, and in looking over the reports which have recently come, I have also seen many of the officers who are just back from there and as a result can give you up-to-date news.

The Philippines in 1912.
Most of us know mighty little of the Philippines. We think that they are a lot of tropical islands on the other side of the Pacific. We have heard that the archipelago bumps its head against the island of Formosa, which now belongs to the Japanese, and that it kicks it feet about 1,300 miles farther south—against the island of Borneo, a possession of the Dutch and the British. We have heard that China is on the west and Hawaii somewhere out in the Pacific on the east, but just how big the islands are and what they contain is a problem. That I shall leave for geography. I will only say that the archipelago, including the water within it, would cover about one-fourth of the United States proper if it could be dropped down upon it; that it comprises something like 7,000 volcanic mountainous islands and that from east to west it is greater than the distance from Boston to Pittsburgh and from north to south about as long as from Philadelphia to Omaha.

The islands altogether have as much land as New England. Luzon is bigger than Ohio; Mindoro and Negros are each as large as Delaware; Mindanao would more than cover Pennsylvania and Samar is the size of Connecticut.

The islands contain, according to our own last census something like 4,000,000 people. Of these 1,000,000 are savages or semi-civilized, believing in spirits and witches or in the prophet Mohammed, and the other 3,000,000 are Christians with the same God as our own. That was what we got for the \$20,000,000 we paid for the archipelago at the close of our war with Spain.

Establishing a Government.
Yes, we got that and more! We got one of the biggest civilizing jobs of all times. The people had been misgoverned for centuries. Justice was bought and sold and bribery and graft reigned supreme. Eighty per cent of the people were ignorant and all lacked faith in their rulers. Taxation was heavy, extortion was common, and none had any rights which the rulers were bound to respect. There were practically no public improvements. The roads were impassable for a greater part of the year, schools were almost unknown and every locality had its brigands and bandits. In addition was the chaos caused by the war, and out of the whole Uncle Sam had not only to create a government of the people and for the people, but to start the wheels of our modern civilization.

It is this work he is doing. I traveled about the islands in 1909, when we were about taking charge. The army was then re-establishing the governments of the towns. As soon as a municipality was conquered the officers called the people together and had them elect a town council and mayor. They organized municipalities of that kind throughout the archipelago, allowing each town to govern itself, and from that they have gone on until the Philippines are now practically self-governed, not only as to the municipalities, but as to the provinces and as one great island whole.

dictator. Uncle Sam still controls the machinery, and he will continue to do so notwithstanding the cry of the Filipino agitators for independence. President Taft, General Edwards and our other officials who know the Philippines best realize that to allow a free hand in the present condition would result in anarchy and chaos. It will be long before the islands can be absolutely free, and their future seems to be bound up with ours.

Nevertheless, the whole country has been politically reorganized. The archipelago has been divided into thirty-eight provinces. Seven of these are inhabited by the Moros and the non-Christian tribes and in these there are governors appointed by the governor-general at Manila, who is at the head of the Philippine commission. The other thirty-one provinces are practically governed themselves. Each province chooses its own officials. It has a governor, secretary, a prosecuting attorney and other officers elected by the people, and consequently native. Each has also a treasurer appointed by the governor-general, and this last an American of known honesty and skilled in accounts.

Every municipality has its president, vice president and city council. There are 700 towns which have that kind of government. The council is an honorary position, and its members serve for the term of the town. The taxes collected in the towns are spent by the towns and the insular government gets its support from indirect taxes. Every town has its body of police, which keeps order in it, and this in addition to the Philippine constabulary, which maintains order in the rural districts throughout the islands.

The Philippine Legislature.
The Philippines, in short, are rapidly coming to have a government like ours. They have this town government, where the officers and police are elected by the people. They have the provincial government, which is like that of our states, and they have what might be called a semi-national government, the president of which is the governor-general, appointed by the president of the United States. He must be an American, and in addition there are seven commissioners to advise him. Of these three are Americans and four are Filipinos. This is the executive branch of the government.

The laws are now made by a congress consisting of this commission and the Philippine assembly. The assembly is elected by the people. It first met in 1907, and it has held a number of sessions since then. It contains eighty members, all Filipinos, and all elected from the various provinces, including the Christian parts of the islands. The Mohammedan Moros and the wild men have no part in it.

This assembly makes the laws and passes upon the appropriations. There is only one reservation, and that is if it should not make appropriations, the appropriations of the preceding session are re-enacted until another assembly should meet. Were it not for this the assembly could hold up the government, and stop all the salaries.

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The Reform of the Prisons.
Since we took possession of the Philippines we have brought about some of the greatest prison reforms of the world. Take Bilibid, which was once about the most horrible penitentiary of the far east. Its prisoners were flogged, and the only mode of execution was by the garrote, a machine which broke the neck of the victim, or rather screwed the head back until the neck cracked.

That institution is now one of the finest prisons under the American flag, and one of the largest of the world. The buildings have been remade, and the institution is now laid out like the spokes of a wheel, with a tower in the center. There is a great wall around it, and upon this are twelve guard towers, in six of which stand American soldiers, armed with Gatling guns, shotguns and revolvers. In the other six are native guards, also armed, but not with Gatlings. In the center tower stands an American guard, with a loaded revolver and three rifles. This man has control of the lighting of the prison, and he can, in an instant, turn off the electricity in any or all the buildings. He has telephone connection, and can call out the force on short notice.

When I visited Bilibid it was dirty and filthy. The prisoners are now made to keep clean, and everything is spotless. There is no waste nor litter. The men are on their good conduct and they may rise from class to class as they do better. At present 50 per cent of the prisoners are in the first class.

The prisoners are well fed and they seem to be contented. They are taught trades of all kinds and they do excellent work. There is a carriage and wagon department which makes wheels which are sent broadcast over the islands. There are also other making shops, weaving rooms and departments where they make hats and baskets. Some of the prisoners are carpenters, some painters and painters. There is also a tailor's shop and a

large printing establishment. There is an execution ward where the murderers are hanged. The garrote has disappeared.

Our Penal Colony at Iwahig.
One of the most remarkable of all prisons is the penal colony at Iwahig, made up of life prisoners, murderers and others who have been sent there as a reward for good conduct at Bilibid. This is on a little island adjoining Palawan. It consists of a reservation of 20 square miles occupied by prisoners who are engaged in manufacturing and farming. These convicts govern themselves. The only Americans connected with them are their superintendent, Mr. C. H. Lamb, and an agricultural expert brought in to teach them to farm. They elect their own officers and make their own laws. They have jury trials in which the vote of the majority convicts, although the superintendent has the right of veto. Some of the convicts as break the laws may be flogged or sent back to Bilibid. The convicts can marry if they wish and they may bring their wives and families to live with them. There are now forty-two women in the colony, and six marriages have occurred this last year.

Each of these convict farmers has his own separate holding. He does his work on the shares, half of the crop going to the prison and the other half to him. The colonists raise their own meat. They have beef cattle, consisting of crosses between native cows and Indian bulls. They have also a fishery.

The colony is now going into coconut raising and it has already set out 5,000 trees. This will not only render it self-supporting, but will enable it to turn in a great deal of money to the support of other prisons on the islands.

General Edwards tells me of a visit he paid last year to Iwahig. He was rowed from his ship to the shore by a murderer, and he found a couple of murderers acting as the family servants of the governor. Mrs. Lamb is the only American woman on the island and she has two little children. Her cook is a convict.

The Health of a Nation.
A great deal of Uncle Sam's work has had to do with the health of the Philippines. The islands are being cleaned up and the cities worked over. Manila has new sewers, which cost about \$2,000,000, and it has a water supply brought in from the head waters of the Marikina river, which are held back by a dam sixty feet high. The reservoir there contains hundreds of millions of gallons, and it is fed by a wild mountainous region where the water is pure.

The mosquitoes are being cleaned out of Manila and elsewhere. The canals have been dredged and the mounds filled up, and parks have taken their places. Now hospitals have been built, and this is so in most of the cities, not only for the Christians, but for the wild men as well. We have doctors connected with the leading tribes, and the savages, instead of making sacrifices to pacify the spirits of disease, are now coming in for castor oil, liver pills and surgical treatment.

A Campaign of Health Education.
A campaign of health instruction has been undertaken and doctors are going about with lantern slide lectures showing the dangers of disease and how to prevent it. Hygiene is taught in the public schools. There are training schools for nurses and a hospital for the insane which now has 500 inmates.

There has been a great fight against cholera and the rats have been slaughtered to wipe out the bubonic plague. The bone piles of the cemeteries have been taken away and the dead are now buried according to law.

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