

Merely as a getting together of the representatives of the eleven member nations (Australia, China, France, India, Pakistan, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Siam, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and of the seven associate member nations or entities (Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Hongkong, Laos, the Malayan Union, and North Borneo), this meeting was supremely worth while. An international meeting of this kind could not have taken place before the establishment of the United Nations organization.

The first ECAFE meeting, held in Shanghai last June, was chiefly organizational, and the first week of the Baguio session was also devoted largely to dealing with questions of membership and organization. The establishment of the associate member category was a wise and propitious compromise. The delegates of rebellious Indonesia were refused seats (though a number of loyal Indonesians were members of the Netherlands delegation). The representatives of Siam, offended when their right to recognition was initially questioned because of the recent over-turn of the government there, walked out and refused to return. Apart from these episodes, the general friendly and cooperative spirit made evident was heartening. The two men who successively were the Chairmen, Dr. T. F. Tsiang, of China, and the Hon. Miguel Cuaderno, Philippine Secretary of Finance, deserve credit for their able leadership and skillful conduct of the meetings. Even the Russian delegation was not too obstructionistic, although it voted favorably on only two of the ten resolutions which were adopted, the delegation generally abstaining.

Of the two resolutions passed unanimously, one, presented by the French delegation, established a new department of statistics which is to engage in the collection and analysis of all regional economic data; the other, presented by the delegation from the United Kingdom, expressed thanks for the "great and generous hospitality extended to the Commission by the Government and people of the Philippine Republic".

The three most important resolutions concern food, industrial development, and trade promotion, respectively.

The first, introduced jointly by the American and Philippine delegations, recommends that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations formulate the 1948-49 food program for Asia as soon as practicable; that a regional committee on food and agriculture in Asia be set up in which ECAFE would be represented; that a working party be appointed which would visit food-producing and food-short areas in Asia with a view to advising on the food-programing; and that ECAFE, in cooperation with the FAO, invite the member and associate member countries to report more definitively on their reconstruction plans and programs on food and agriculture. The resolution also expresses support of the proposal to establish a Regional Fisheries Council.

A related resolution declared that an appeal should be made to the food-producing countries concerned and to the FAO to consider measures jointly and severally for bringing down to a "reasonable level" the prices of cereals exported to the countries within the regional scope of ECAFE "where such prices appear to be excessive".

The resolution concerning industrialization, introduced by the United Kingdom delegation, calls for the setting up of an ECAFE working party to prepare a report on existing plans for promoting the industrial development in each country of the region, with special reference to the availability of capital and the necessary technical skills, and to formulate proposals based thereon for the consideration of the Commission.

The resolution concerning trade promotion, introduced by the American delegation, recognizes that trade promotional efforts by member governments is an appropriate

activity to facilitate economic recovery and advance, and recommends that the Secretariat prepare a plan for the coordination of trade promotional work among the member governments to be presented at the third session of ECAFE to be held in India next May.

Each of these three leading resolutions was adopted by a vote of 9 to 0, with the Siamese delegation absent and only the Russian delegation abstaining.

Other resolutions adopted included one recommending to the Economic and Social Council the establishment of a Bureau of Flood Control, with particular reference to the great rivers of Asia, and another, addressed to the Food and Agriculture Organization, recommending that in view of the war-devastation and the pressing need for new housing, a Technical Conference on Timber in Asia and the Far East be called for the purpose of bringing about the fullest possible utilization of Asia's great timber resources; standardization of international timber terminology is also recommended.

The Baguio session was opened with an address by the President of the Philippines, and, as he said, —

"The formulation of blueprints for the economic development of our respective countries is a relatively easy task. The real difficulties will be found in the effectuation of these plans."

The chief obstacles, Mr. Roxas said, was the lack of capital, and he voiced an eloquent appeal to the nations "able to help others" not to overlook Asia in helping Europe. The President referred both to altruistic and materialistic or partly materialistic motives, and also to possible political motives in the extension of such aid.

It is to be observed that whatever the motive, there are limits to the ability to help on the part of even the wealthiest nations. It must not be overlooked that the ability to help and to continue to help can be based only on a return from the loans made or the capital invested. Help granted and received on a merely philanthropic basis, on the appallingly large scale "loans" are today being granted and received, would only and inevitably lead to the impoverishment of the more wealthy granting nations and the pauperization of the receiving nations.

In the consideration of these dreary facts, the efforts of ECAFE in promoting a degree of self-help in this part of the world, is vastly refreshing.

In view of the propaganda, chiefly political, still occasionally heard, concerning the alleged "continued exploitation" of the Philippines Re "Exploitation" by the United States through the Philippine Trade Act and the so-called "Parity" (which propaganda is sometimes coupled with demands for the amendment of the Trade Act), there is cause for some satirical chuckles in the recent developments at the conference in Havana of the United Nations International Trade Organization.

At Havana, this "exploitation" was considered "preferential treatment" objected to by some of the other nations represented, and as, for a time, the fear arose here that decisions might be taken at the Conference which might somehow alter the situation, the Philippine Government was quick to protest.

Later, the following press-release was issued at Malacañan, which we quote in full for the satisfaction of our readers:

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE PRESS REGARDING THE PREFERENTIAL TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINES

The President expressed great satisfaction this afternoon when he read the statement made by President Truman at a press conference in Washington yesterday, giving assurances that the preferential trade agreement between the Philippines and the United States would not in any way be altered by any decisions which might be made at the ITO

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conference in Havana. It will be recalled that President Roxas protested vigorously against attempt in connection with the ITO Charter to modify the trade preferences between the Philippines and the United States for the duration of the trade agreement, and that he instructed Secretary Abello, who is now head of the Philippine delegation in Havana, not to sign any agreement which might in any way disturb our preferential trade with the United States or prejudice the interests of the Philippines.

The President expressed appreciation of the attitude of President Truman and remarked that he is grateful to Ambassador O'Neal with whom he and the Vice-President conferred on this subject (to enlist) his cooperation in bringing this matter to the attention of the President of the United States.

In this connection, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs released for publication a telegram received from the Philippine Embassy in Washington which reads as follows:

WASHINGTON D.C. DECEMBER 18, 1947

SECFORAF
MANILA

2129 REURAD 4286 PRESIDENT TRUMAN AT PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY FLATLY DENIED UNISTATES HAS ANY INTENTION ABANDONING ITS TREATY UNDER WHICH PHILIPPINES GETS CERTAIN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FROM UNISTATES. PRESIDENT DECLARED THERE IS NOT A WORD OF TRUTH IN ANY REPORT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS IN MIND ABANDONING THIS TREATY. HE ADDED IT WOULD NOT ABANDON THE TREATY AS LONG AS HE WAS PRESIDENT.

STATE DEPARTMENT TRANSMITTED AMBASSADOR O'NEAL'S MESSAGE AMERICAN DELEGATION HAVANA. BEFORE TRUMAN MADE STATEMENT REACTION OF DIVISION COMMERCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT INFORMALLY EXPRESSED TO US WAS THAT ON BASIS OF DRAFT CHARTER APPROVED GENEVA THERE SHOULD BE NO GROUND FOR APPREHENSION IN THIS REGARD AS UNDER ARTICLE 16 PARAGRAPH 2 SUBPARAGRAPH B PREFERENCES GRANTED PHILIPPINES PURSUANT TRADE AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE ELIMINATED. THEY SUGGEST THERE MIGHT BE MISUNDERSTANDING ON INTERPRETATION. WE HAVE ARRANGED FOR CONFERENCE TOMORROW BETWEEN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES AND STATE DEPARTMENT EXPERTS ON THE SUBJECT. WILL INFORM YOU FURTHER.

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