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## Kyrie Eleison—Lord, Have Mercy!

It has been a month of things-not-done with the executive. Governor Davis has not gone fishing. He has not grown unduly impatient, as has the daily press, of the fact that the legislative mill grinds slowly. Best of all, he has not gone haywire, as the country generally has, over the King-resolution vote in connection with the Federal senate's consideration of the tariff; a vote which stood 39-43 against setting up a new nation in the orient, that nation to be the Philippines, and immediately taxable under the American tariff. Governors, and no less legislatures, may sometimes be commended for what they refrain from doing; it seems now that Congress will not even pass the tariff bill, let alone passing it with King's or Broussard's extraneous addenda attached.

Yet the fire of oratory plays round the Philippine question in Washington, and the Philippines seem at once to spurn and to yearn toward its hopeful but devastating light. The King resolution, if correctly remembered, would authorize the President to negotiate a set of international treaties respecting the Philippines; that is, it gives with one hand and withholds with the other. Long are the years involved in negotiating any set of treaties, and quick is the inclination of the Federal senate to reject them—once executive diligence has patiently put them through. According to men with authority to speak, the Philippines are not really looking around for a new consort, nor do they expect Uncle Sam to abandon them or drive them out into world alone. Should he do so, they would be much in the character of the buxom dame who, recommending herself to a marriage bureau, remarked, "I can live with anybody—I have been divorced."

There is something in smiling and keeping wide awake, but thoroughly calm. The work of thirty years could be scrapped overnight, but it hardly will be. The question seethed for awhile, filling men with perturbations, but Governor Davis's watchful and silent neutrality helped a lot, and feeling soon eased perceptibly.

Ben Wright, after six years, retired from the insular auditor's post—with pleasure in ridding himself of a wearying office, and commendation of Governor Davis's way of handling questions rising to him from the auditor's decisions. It is not radio news that another has succeeded Fighting Ben, ordinarily the auditor's office is as barren of news of national significance as a mildewed tombstone in Cementerio del Norte. Ben, not the office, or the official, was the news.

More movies went talkie. The senate, too, went into many a talkie caucus, but when this paper had to be typed Governor Davis was still smilingly confident and the game was still being played on his own pitch. Before this comment reaches the reader, the legislature will have adjourned and what is really to happen will be known. Meantime a little act has become law which empowers probe committees to summon witnesses and examine them under oath, and to compel them thus to give testimony. This looks bad for the weak side.

Unable to elicit information as to what the executive may do in matters which remain under consideration in the legislative branch of the government, the newspapers have begun *guessing*. They have guessed, and would it shall be true! that Governor Davis will not extend the beef-cattle-importation contract. Not to do so would, of course, the law remaining un-amended, mean millions a year to the Philippine cattle industry—and



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anything bringing even a single million to any of the islands' industries just now is well worth putting into effect. It is hard, however, to bring one's self to believe that so much confidence in the resources of the islands prevails among officials, but one may *guess* it does.

No doubt Governor Davis is watching another matter closely, that of the radiograph contract between the government and the Radio Corporation of the Philippines, which expires May 10, 1930. Recommendations for renewal have come from most of the communities benefiting, which in all are eight: Iloilo, Cebu, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Misamis, Tacloban, Davao, Aparri, Laoag. As everyone knows, the telegraph service was formerly an activity of the posts bureau, and so it remains excepting the portion here mentioned. Some would even give this back to the bureau, and are asking sums varying from P15,000 to P350,000 (for the first year alone) for the purpose. It was, in the beginning, by mere accidental arrangement that the telegraph service of the old army signal corps fell to the lot of the posts bureau: the functions of the military administration were being distributed among the bureaus being established under the civil government, and so the posts bureau got the telegraph and cable lines. Inadvertently, almost, a branch of the Federal government went into the dispatch business. Shall it now gradually withdraw?

The radio equipment the contracting company has installed may have cost around P300,000; it is to be written off during the term of the contract, and the residue of profits, if any, is for the company; excepting, that of all the tolls collected the posts bureau receives 25%, the government being sure of this much profit. The lot of employes is better with the company than with the government, it seems. The company is a subsidiary of the Radio Corporation of America, and its employes are associated therefore with the world organization; the company likes to get its operators on a base pay of P125 a month as soon as they are competent, while experienced operators in the posts bureau lag along for years at P60 to P70 a month—not a living wage for a man with a family.

Business houses do not relish comparing the two services, the old being a nightmare to them and the new very satisfactory in all respects. It is true that during a period of eight months the new service has encountered some 1,100 complaints, 800 of them during periods of circuit trouble. But it is also true that the old practice of sending messages *rush* at triple rates has been eliminated almost entirely, and during the eight months mentioned the total number of messages handled was 235,000, of which 1,100 is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1%—really a little less. One would say this is not a bad showing, and the attitude of the public using the service shows that it is not. One firm's experience has been an average delay of 30 minutes between Iloilo and Manila, as against 540 minutes in the old service (with many messages sent *rush* at triple rates), and an average

delay of 90 minutes between Cebu and Manila, as against 600 minutes in the old service. The service between Cebu and Manila can be improved, as no doubt it will be, particularly if the contract is extended.

Such are some of the elements of the question, another vital one being that the contracting company has the benefit (which the posts bureau would not have) of expert supervision both of engineering and traffic by staff members loaned from the parent company. These men are employed for the transoceanic service and are available for the interisland service. For



Kirby in N. Y. World  
"Tell Papa where it hurts the worst."

Maybe it hurts worst in the region of the Philippines.

equally competent technicians the government, should it resume the undertaking, would have to pay very high. It would not do so, and it therefore would not put itself into a position to render the service the public is now enjoying, and an increasing personnel is benefiting from by receiving living wages.

Another *guess* as to what will happen. On October 10, a Sunday, Governor Davis opened to public traffic one of the most strategically placed river bridges in the islands, the General Antonio Luna bridge over the Rio Grande de Pampanga at Valdefuente, Cabanatuan. The bridge is 605 meters long, of 13 spans; originally begun years ago by a contractor, the work was finally taken over by the government and finished by administration under the public-works bureau. The cost is estimated at about P900,000, which may be carried in the mind of the taxpayer as a million. The cost will very promptly be returned to the treasury in tolls, which are to be

collected, on which point Percy A. Hill furnishes some data:

"The bridge will be a toll bridge for all traffic except pedestrian, the charges falling heavily on the trucking companies transporting palay. The tolls on trucks are graded according to tonnage, from P0.80 to P1.40 for trucks from 1 to 4 tons if loaded and slightly lower if empty. Trailers used to pay the same tolls, so that if a truck and trailer of combined 9-ton capacity cross the bridge the tolls are, going and coming, P6.50, or approximately 3 centavos a cavan of palay carried. The argument used is to place prohibitive tolls on heavy traffic. For example, a 4-ton trailer loaded pays P1.40, and P1.20 if empty; if 5 tons are loaded it pays P2.50, practically double for the extra ton."

It seems that passenger automobiles cross the bridge for a toll of 30 centavos. Mr. Hill furnishes the following schedule of tolls on trucks: Loaded; 1T P0.80, 2T P0.90, 3T P1.20, 4T P1.40; empty, 1T P0.50, 2T P0.80, 3T P1.00, 4T P1.40. This will hit industry hard, but at least the bridge obviates the oldtime ferry service over the Rio Grande.

"The bridge at Pasong Insak (Chinese Ford), north of San Juan de Guimba," says Mr. Hill, "was opened two months ago and the only ferry-bridge remaining on the Manila-north road is that over the Rio Chico at Gapan, where a bridge, which would be far less costly than that at Cabanatuan, is badly needed. By reason of the Antonio Luna bridge, the Manila-north road is shortened some three kilometers, to say nothing of eliminating the waiting at the ferry during the rainy season. The bridge is the outlet to market in Cabanatuan (Rocky Ford) of 3,417,800 cavans of palay (the crop last season) from nine towns. This does not include 750,000 cavans from the Aliaga-Zaragoza district, which will be hauled over the old collapsible bridge to avoid a 5-kilometer detour, nor an equal amount coming into Cabanatuan from the Bongabong-Laur district along the south bank of the Rio Grande.

"The utility of the bridge is not questioned, but this year it will fill a special requirement concerned with the new warehouse act going into effect January 1 and killing the placing of palay on deposit in Cabanatuan. Palay will have to move over the bridge during the entire season, provided prices offered are favorable to producers. The law has proved a boomerang and backed the rice industry to the rear"—which is getting quite far afield and is where Mr. Hill's notes must be closed. One might hazard a wild *guess* that at his convenience Governor Davis will look into the question of bridge tolls throughout the islands, and tip some functionary off to do something about them.

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