

Money Cost of Philippines to United States

Frederick Chamberlain in "The Philippine Problem"—1913

In any comprehensive study of our future policy toward the Philippines, we can hardly avoid computing what they are costing us. Concerning this, most widely differing statements have been made, apparently, however, not because of any real difficulty in reaching substantial accord, but for the reason that the various computations are of an interest in making the figures large or small to support certain preconceived positions. The injection of the Philippine problem into politics has been mainly responsible for this situation, and as an illustration we may take a recent Congressional report which estimates that it is costing us annually twenty-six million dollars to maintain our armed forces in the Islands. This enormous total is easily reached by multiplying the mean number of soldiers out there by fifteen hundred dollars, upon the basis that "It is estimated that it costs the government fifteen hundred dollars annually to maintain each soldier in the foreign service."

The surprising thing about such an assertion is that the total is made so small. A much larger amount could just as well have been predicated upon that phrase "It is estimated."

The facts are substantially as follows:

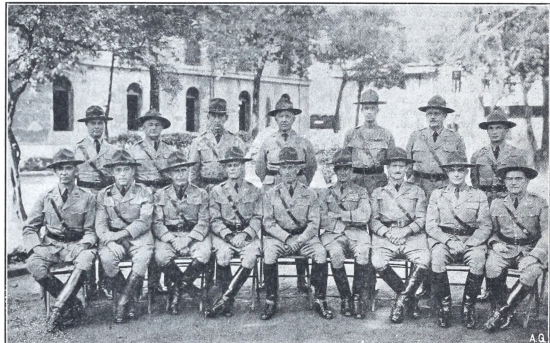
For the last ten years, we have averaged 5097 men in the Philippine Scouts, whose 4971 enlisted men are all Filipinos, paid \$7.50 per month, just half of what our American troops receive. In a special report to the President, dated January 23, 1908, Secretary of War Taft stated that the Department reckoned five hundred dollars as the cost in toto to the United States for each man in the Scouts. The pay roll of this organization for 1911 was \$1,019,562. The report of the commissary-general of the army puts the cost of the Philippine daily ration at \$2455. This means half a million dollars for the Scouts' rations for the year 1911. There are also the various allowances for clothing, marksmanship, travel, certificates of merit, etc., which, estimated at two hundred dollars per man of the total force of 5097, adds a round million to the previous million and a half dollars, giving us two and a half million dollars as the cost of the Scouts to the United States for the year. Mr. Taft reckoned at the rate of \$250 per man, a total of \$2,548,500, substantially the same figure.

Turning to the cost of our regular officers and men, 13,500 of whom we have kept out there upon the average for the past ten years, Mr. Taft says in the same report that the expense of their transportation and maintenance, over what these items would be had the troops remained in America, he estimates as \$250 per man, which amounts to but \$3,375,250 per annum. This figure appears to be too small, as the following details will demonstrate.

The appropriation by Congress in 1911 for extra pay for officers and men of the army because in foreign service was \$1,196,000. Two thirds of the force thus engaged was in the Philippines. We may therefore roughly consider that these last used a similar proportion of the appropriation, or eight hundred thousand dollars.

The average cost for these ten years for the army transport service between the various Philippine Islands was eight hundred and eighty-nine thousand dollars per annum. To this should be added the cost of troop transportation across the Pacific and back; and if the Philippines be charged with \$2,198,000, which is two thirds of the average annual cost for the ten years in question of all our ocean transports, it is a maximum estimate. The cost of cabling to and from the army in the Islands has averaged forty-four thousand dollars per annum for the decade. It costs two cents per diem more for the Philippine ration than for the ration in the United States, or \$92,994 a year for the 12,739 enlisted men we have averaged yearly since 1902. We have averaged, for the same period, to spend one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars each year for coast and geodetic survey work in the Archipelago. To this should be

added, as an outside figure, an annual depreciation of ten per cent of the original cost of the fortifications and accessories thereto, and of the barracks and quarters erected in the Islands prior to August 20, 1912, their combined figures, according to the War Department, amounting to \$15,327,753. The fortifications cost \$4,494,305; and the barracks and quarters, \$10,833,448. The figure for depreciation and upkeep is \$1,532,775. If all these items are added they total \$5,731,769. Allowances to the extent of some three hundred and twenty eight



GENERAL SLADEN AND STAFF

Sitting from Left to Right—Colonel Fred T. Austin, Major G. H. Faine, Major H. G. Fitz, Colonel Guy V. Henry, Major General Fred W. Slayden (President Commanding General, Philippine Department), Major J. K. Bales, Major E. N. Hardy, Lt. Col. W. L. Patterson, Lt. Col. H. C. Smith. Standing from Left to Right—Major Wm. B. Duty, Lt. Col. Frank J. Griffin, Colonel E. E. Dean, Colonel E. A. Hickman, Lt. Col. H. C. Jewett, Lt. Col. G. L. Wall, Major A. Gibson.

thousand dollars for officers' quarters (computed at thirty-six dollars per month, for three rooms, for each of the 761 officers) and forty thousand dollars, to the same number, for fuel and light, should be added. The total is now increased to \$6,099,789, and adding the two and a half million dollars that the Scouts cost us, as admitted by Mr. Taft, whose interest it is to make the figure as low as possible, we have the annual average cost of the Philippines to us for the past ten years as \$8,599,769. If we allow fifteen per cent approximately a quarter of a million dollars for extras and good measure, the gross is ten million dollars. This is certainly an outside estimate.

There are other figures that should be remembered. For example, we spent one hundred and sixty-nine million dollars upon our forces in the Islands from June 30, 1898, to July 1, 1902.* Then we voted three million dollars to the natives, when their carabaoe were killed by the rinderpest in 1902-1903. Congress also donated three hundred and fifty-one thousand dollars to aid the Insular Government in completing its census. If to these figures we add a hundred million dollars for the total running expenses, as just computed above, for the last ten years, and \$15,327,753 as the cost of the fortifications, barracks, and quarters, the total cost of the Islands to us up to June 30, 1912, is two hundred and eighty-seven million dollars.

If anybody thinks that if we did not have the Islands we should reduce our army by discharging therefrom the regulars we keep in the Philippines, he may increase the ten million dollars and the two hundred and eighty-seven million dollars by the proper figure. But it is rather

idle to assume anything of that character. Whether the army would or would not be reduced is entirely in the keeping of Congress alone. The weight of the evidence is that the American people will not now favor any reduction of our army. Certainly, irrespective of the Philippines, our foreign affairs are growing more and more delicate, especially to the south of us and in China. The Spanish War taught us the foolhardiness of too small a regular force, and the lessons of that conflict are not yet dim.

As for the additional naval expense which may be thought to have been undertaken by reason of the possession of the Islands, that is negligible, for it is evident that we keep no greater naval force in the Far East than we should anyhow. For many years we have maintained the Pacific Fleet, and everybody now realizes that it must probably be increased

to the size of that in the Atlantic, for it will be but a short time, as the history of nations computes time, when our western coast will be as important from a national point of view as is the eastern seaboard today.

There are, too, important credits that we must give to this account. Upon at least two occasions we have put men very promptly into China because we had them in Manila. Each was a most critical period. It may entertain some people to try to put into figures just how many dollars we saved by having regiments on the China coast within fifty hours of these particular outbreaks instead of after thirty days, the usual time consumed in transporting troops across the Pacific, assuming that we have them at the port of departure. Inability upon our part to have done our full share in the two instances referred to might very easily have swung the balance of power in the Far East farther away from us and toward the nations whose troops were on the ground. We have maintained the "Open Door" in China because we have had, upon every occasion when it seemed about to be closed, first, as much of a force there as anybody else, and, second, our occupation of the Philippines gave us substantial reason for asserting a commanding attitude in anything affecting that region. If one try to estimate what this dominating position be worth in money to America, he will soon find himself figuring in the hundreds of millions.

Then there is the money value of knowing how to handle troops in the tropical zone, and of having an efficient transport service, instead of having to make one, as had to be done in 1898. At that time we wasted large sums because we lacked this knowledge; we killed hundreds of men by disease.

* Congressional Record, February 25, 1908; speech of J. Slayden, pp. 2532, et seq.