

Philippines Participates in International Conferences

Ever since President Quezon established the headquarters of the Commonwealth Government in Washington, the Philippines has been invited to the most important international conferences held here in the United States. In all of them, Philippine delegates participate in the proceedings as representatives of a sovereign nation.

Invariably, the presence of Philippine representatives arouses great interest in these gatherings. People who have never before heard of the Philippines now want full information on its geography, political history and economic development. Philippine delegates are frequently asked to read papers on Philippine topics and their audiences always seem to want more. Beyond doubt, interest in the country has never before been so high as it is now. When the Filipino and American soldiers made their sacrificial stand on Bataan and Corregidor, they held, for an unforgettable moment, the concentrated attention of the world. That interest has remained at a high pitch, as indicated by the great number of current books about the Philippines and the popularity of the Philippines as a subject on the lecture platform. The world eagerly awaits the sequel to Bataan and Corregidor.

Some of these conferences are informal and serve merely as a forum for exchange of opinion and public discussion of vital subjects. Such, for example, was the Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations held at Mont Tremblant, Canada, in December, 1942. Others are official consultations between heads of representative governments where high policies are discussed. An outstanding example of this is the Pacific War Council. A list of the meetings, conventions, and conferences in which the Philippines was represented will show how busy Philippine delegates have been.

I. Eighth Conference, Institute of Pacific Relations, Mont Tremblant, December 2 to 14, 1942.

Delegates:

Joaquin M. Elizalde
Arturo B. Rotor
Urbano A. Zafra
Sebastian Ugarte
Francis B. Harrison

II. Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia, April 9 and 10, 1943.

Delegates:

Jaime Hernandez
Arturo B. Rotor
Sotero Laurel

Vice-President Osmeña was one of the three speakers at the final session.

III. International Committee for Cooperative Reconstruction, Washington, March 29, 1943.

Representative:

Urbano A. Zafra

IV. United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture, Hot Springs, May 18 to June 3, 1943.

Delegates:

Joaquin M. Elizalde
Arturo B. Rotor
Urbano A. Zafra
Juan B. Barretto
Amando M. Dalisay
Basilio J. Valdes

Currently taking place are talks between the United States Government and other governments on currency

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not for the pressing official duties which require my presence in Washington these next few weeks. I sincerely regret that I am unable to be with you in this important gathering.

"I have made arrangements, however, for Mr. Manuel A. Adeva, Nationals Division Assistant, to attend the Convention as my representative. He is vitally interested not only in the community organizations, but also in all your problems. He will surely assist you in every way possible to insure the success of your deliberations.

"Our country is still in the hands of the enemy and may remain so for many more years. Nevertheless, I have no misgivings as to the final outcome of this war. I sincerely hope that when the time comes for us to be in our own homes and country again, you and I will find ourselves more prepared and better equipped to discharge our respective responsibilities. Those of us in the United States can and should play an important part in the post-war reconstruction period of the Philippines.

"I trust that you will consider seriously in your meetings, not only how best you can help win the war, but also how effectively you can contribute to the building up of a

new Philippines."

On the last day of the convention, a memorial service was held in memory of the late Francisco Varona, who as Nationals Division Assistant to the Philippine Resident Commissioner, fathered the idea of Filipino conventions attended by delegates from different parts of the Pacific Coast.

The First Filipino Inter-Community Convention was held in Sacramento in 1938. It resulted in the creation of the Nationals Division of the Philippine Commissioner's Office. This division has supervision over the affairs of Filipinos in the United States and Hawaii.

The Organization is composed of the organized Filipino communities in Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. These community organizations are officially recognized by the Office of the Philippine Resident Commissioner in Washington, which keeps in touch with them on matters relating to Filipino nationals.

On the last day of the convention, Antonio A. Gonzalez was reelected president.

A similar convention is scheduled next year.