

bribery and blackmail and violence to get votes, or to fraud in the conduct of elections. Corrupt machines are parasitic upon the legitimate political parties, as they are upon the whole community.

This parasitism is, of course, natural under certain conditions, just as it is natural for a dog to have worms and fleas. That we have criminals in the world is something that we must accept. But to put them over us, is not necessary. We do not have to choose them to run our public affairs.

It is necessary, in a democracy, for the people to accept the responsibilities as well as the advantages of self-government. There must be general devotion to the common interest and determined will to pursue the high aim of establishing and maintaining a sound nation.

In the Philippines, the national political organization has, for a number of reasons, long had the compactness that lends itself to one-man control. That, during the greater part of this time, the successive supreme leaders were good men, true patriots, who might have abused their power, but did not, was largely a matter of the country's good luck. The people trusted them and followed them more or less blindly.

Death or retirement has ended their great careers. The people have now to choose leaders from among the present group of office holders or to project new leaders from among themselves. Blind faith is no longer wise. The people must be alert and on their guard, or the democratic system here will fail.

What is probably the worst about the decision of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce to express itself as favoring a revision of the Bell Act, is its poor timing,—a timing which might perhaps

Tinkering with become dangerous. The Chamber the Bell Act; only declared that it favored revision the Taylor Bill looking toward "selective free trade both ways", as advocated by Mr. Salvador Araneta, but its meetings and discussions and the final resolution, all played-up in the press, closely followed the introduction by the Wallace-ite Senator Glen Taylor of Bill No. 694 which would repeal the Philippine Trade Act of 1946 (the Bell Act) outright while "an investigation by the Congress and the enactment of legislation governing the economic relations between the United States and the Republic" would still be "pending". We would suddenly find ourselves entirely outside of the American tariff wall and the protection which it gives the Philippines. Repeat first; "investigation" later. And then what, if anything?

Section F of the Taylor Bill declares that the Bell Act is "inconsistent with the sovereignty of the Republic of the Philippines" as it limits Philippine control over the country's resources, tariffs, foreign trade, and currency. The Section further declares that the Bell Act is "incompatible with American democratic principles" and is a "contributing cause to growing unrest in the Philippines"; "detrimental to American trade and the raising of the living standards of the American people and beneficial only to a small group of American monopolist interests"; and "prejudicial to the good neighborly relations between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines, and con-

tributing to friction and the unsettling of peaceful relations in the Pacific".

This is a malignant indictment, and the full text, which was abbreviated in the preceding paragraph for the sake of clarity, is even more so. For instance, it is declared that free trade is continued "in varying degrees until 1974 so that the Philippines will remain dependent on the American market and fail to industrialize and become self-sustaining." Senator Taylor charges the United States Government with having that deliberate purpose! Also: the Bell Act is incompatible with American democratic principles because it imposes "onerous controls on the war-ravaged Philippine economy as the price of assisting in its rehabilitation and development."

However, in making this charge, the Senator unintentionally and illogically admits that this nefarious Bell Act does, after all, assist in the rehabilitation and development of the Philippines!

We found cause for a satirical chuckle in the fact that at Havana, during the conference of the United Nations International Trade Organization (November, 1947—March, 1948) all this "exploitation" of the Philippines was considered "preferential treatment" by the other nations represented at the meeting. Some of them made objections, and it being feared both in the Philippines and the United States, that decisions might be taken which would alter the Philippines' preferential position, the Philippine Government was quick to protest against any change.

The then President of the Philippines, Manuel Roxas, issued a statement from Malacañan which read:

"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 (Bell Act) between the Philippines and the United States would not in any way be altered by any decision which might be made at the ITO conference in Havana. It will be recalled that President Roxas protested vigorously against attempts in connection with the ITO Charter to modify the trade preferences between the Philippines and the United States for the duration of the trade agreements, 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 communist-fringe of rattle-brains in the United States may not know what it is doing in giving backing to aspersions cast on United States policy, and to schemes to wreck rehabilitation and recovery in all parts of the world outside the Russian sphere, including the Philippines. But we may be sure that the Cuban sugar lobby, which keeps a covetous eye on the Philippine sugar quota, will be a most zealous supporter of the Taylor Bill and of the Philippine Chamber in any clamor in connection with securing possible changes in the Bell Act.

In all the recent discussion of the Act, as reported in the Philippine press, we have noted not a single reference to those sections which convey the most vital advantages to the Philippines,—such as sections 211 and 212, which establish absolute Philippine quotas for sugar and cordage.

As to our sugar industry, one of the three mainstays of our economy, we can think of no more unsuitable time to weaken in any way the present security of the industry under the Bell Act. A few years ago there might have been some excuse for "econo-

mists" and "analysts" to imagine that the plight of Java and Formosa would create a vacuum in the world sugar market which the Philippines could fill if it lost the American market. But the rapid rehabilitation of European production and the great Cuban sugar tonnage have already brought the world's production to a point at which it will surpass the probable consumption.

As for other elements of the Bell Act, "Parity" for example, which has called forth the most emotional outbursts from critics of the measure, we admit that with reference to this, some of the clauses might have been better phrased, at least if there had been more time, but in substance this feature would operate to the very great benefit of the country if it were not in part nullified by subsequent local legislation and other government action which is discouraging American investment even under the supposed advantages it bestows. We have yet to hear of a single case in which "parity" has been exploited by any American national or entity to the disadvantage of any Filipino, but even if a few individual cases of this kind could be brought forward, such disadvantage would be insignificant in comparison to the immense benefits conferred on the Philippines by the Bell Act as a whole.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce is *not* asking for the abrogation of the Bell Act, only,—and that hesitantly, for certain changes the nature of which, or the advantages, if any, are still far from clear.

We would ask the Chamber to be wary, lest it give aid and comfort to senator Glen Taylor whose bill is an insult both to the United States and the Philippines and to be intelligence as well.

A bill introduced by Senator Tañada, providing for the "disposition of lands acquired by aliens in violation of the provisions of the Philippine Constitution," which the Tañada Alien Land Disposition Bill failed of passage during the third session of Congress, has been reintroduced.

The plan set forth in this bill shows considerably more conscience than the proposal of the Solicitor General merely to confiscate such lands, which was the subject of an editorial in the March issue of this Journal.

In his explanatory note prefaced to the bill, Senator Tañada states:

"After the promulgation by our Supreme Court of its decision in the Krivenko case, there arose a certain confusion on what to do with the lands acquired by aliens in violation of our Constitution. To remedy this situation a plan is evolved by the undersigned whereby the aims and purposes of our Constitution could be given effect and be safeguarded without committing injustices to those alien purchasers who honestly believed that they were not suffering from a constitutional inhibition at the time they made their purchases.

"... If we now deprive these aliens of all material benefits from these transactions we will be committing a grave injustice to them.

"We must also take into consideration that outright confiscation of the lands involved in these transactions in favor of the State might give rise to international complications...

"The purpose of this measure is to correct the violation of our Constitution in such a way that the aims and purposes of our Constitution may be preserved and at the same time not unduly and unjustly deprive the aliens concerned of their rights on the properties held by them..."

In short, the Tañada bill would give alien owners of lands held in violation of the Constitution (as interpreted by the Supreme Court) one year to convey

them to "persons duly qualified to own such lands." After that time, if not thus conveyed, the lands would be confiscated.

Sales made for the purpose of evading the measure would be nullified and the land in such cases would also be confiscated, those concerned in the evasion on both sides being subject to loss of citizenship (in the case of naturalized citizens), and deportation. The measure would apply to corporations, partnerships, and associations as well as individuals, and in the case of the former, violations would lead to the dissolving of the entity. Violators, including the responsible officers and employees of corporations, partnerships, and associations would be subject to imprisonment of not more than five years or a fine of not more than ₱5,000, in the discretion of the court.

Fairer though the Tañada plan is than a course of outright confiscation, the measure would actually cancel none of the fundamental objections brought against the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution with respect to alien landownership, which extends even to the ownership of small tracts for business and home-building purposes,—that, in the first place, the decision itself was unconstitutional as a constitutional ruling, as it was not the opinion of two-thirds of the members of the Court; and that the policy the decision underwrites is basically narrow, undemocratic, unjust, uneconomic, unpolitical, and, indeed, inhuman.

The purchase of a piece of land is in the majority of cases much more than a mere "transaction," involving "material benefits." Real estate agents and land speculators are few. Land is generally bought for a life purpose,—to develop a plantation or farm, to erect a mill or factory, a warehouse, an office building, a store, a home. Land purchase in most cases involves long-term plans and projects, purpose, enterprise, confidence, contentment, good citizenship.

The new land policy proclaimed by six men on the Supreme Court (we assert that it is new and not to be read in the Constitution if one is able to understand plain English), affects all of these constructive economic and social and ethical concerns.

Suppose that the Tañada bill became law and that aliens who acquired lands here since the year 1935, when the Constitution was adopted and ratified (ratified, May 14), were forced to throw all their lands and buildings onto the market, in many cases, no doubt, the contents, too. We do not have any official figures available, but the total present values affected would probably run into many hundreds of millions of pesos. It is not difficult to foresee what would happen to these values in the glut which would ensue in the real estate market, the forced sacrifices, the tremendous losses.

And what money would be obtained by the owners from these forced sales, would these people, does anyone suppose, be in the mood to reinvest it in the country? What would they feel they could safely invest it in? Would many of them even try to go on with their businesses, as tenants more or less at the mercy of the new landlords?

There can be no doubt that there would be a considerable fall in production, which the Government is otherwise trying to augment; in consumption, too, which the Government is otherwise trying to raise; in employment, which the Government is otherwise trying to increase; in a flight of capital from the