

Philip II's First Law for the Philippines

THE KING. That which you, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, have to do and take account of in the governing, discovery and settlement of these islands of the west, which we have given you in charge, is the following:

1. You will explore said islands and choose sites and places for settlement, having in mind that the land selected may be good and fertile, well watered, with firewood, and pasture for cattle; such lands as are not occupied or used by the natives, to which end you will establish your settlements somewhat apart from those of the natives in order that quarrels may not arise.

2. Having chosen the site for settlement, you will order houses built, making them somewhat strong, where, if it should be convenient, it would be possible to defend them and the cattle in case the natives offered offense or made an attack.

3. You will provide that the settlers cultivate the friendship and good faith of the natives, that they treat them well and invite them to establish settlements of their own nearby those of the Spaniards, that they defend and assist the natives, and persuade the recalcitrant, and try, by means of priests and other well-disposed persons, to win them voluntarily to our Holy Catholic Faith and the Christian religion.

4. If there are among the natives persons who interfere with others who wish to hear the preaching of the doctrine and be converted, you will take all means available to restrain them, in order that the evangelization of the islands proceed apace, with benignity and moderation.

5. You will provide that natives who voluntarily come to know our Holy Catholic Faith and make themselves our subjects be absolved from payment of tribute for ten years.

6. You will see to it that the Spanish colonists who settle in the communities you establish

live and govern themselves in peace and harmony, choosing the magistrates, councilmen, and police officers temporarily necessary until we otherwise provide.

7. To Spaniards of good character, disposed to peace, you will grant in our name communities of the natives; you will place in my charge the principal capitals and the ports, these being near, and collect, above all, the revenue from the taxpayers in the native communities allotted the settlers, taking into account the ten-year exemption from tribute mentioned above.

8. You will fix salaries for the magistrates and councilmen, for the lay brothers and the religious, and impress upon all the dignity of the obligations they are to discharge, that every man may understand what he is to do: hold every man to strictest account for his misdeeds or excesses, either toward his fellows or the natives.

9. The aforesaid being effected, you will establish commerce with neighboring countries, providing them with things they may need and procuring in one country that which is wanting and needed in another.

10. You will send out religious and other good persons to preach the doctrine to the people and persuade them to receive our religion, and if they are scattered you will establish pueblos of them to the end that they may be more readily converted.

11. You will attend to it that those to whom lands and native inhabitants are assigned be on the lookout for places where new pueblos may suitably be established, always, as provided in paragraph 1 above, without prejudice to the natives.

12. Houses having been built and fields prepared for cultivation, you will undertake the discovery of mines and other things that may be

made use of; have the soil cultivated and supply new plants of vines and arbors of fruit for the colony's sustenance and advantage.

13. Should the natives defend one of their own places, you will make them understand you do not wish to settle there, do them injury or possess their fields, but to have friendship with them and teach them to live in a civilized manner, that they may know God and his laws by which they shall have salvation. This precaution taken and friendliness exhibited, which shall be done three times during the period which seems right to the person you nominate to undertake it, whom the religious will accompany, and by voice and exhortation implore submission, and notwithstanding all that is said the natives still do not consent to the settlement, the colonists may take steps to defend themselves from the natives, without doing more injury than is necessary for their defense, and the founding of the pueblo, taking care in defense of themselves to be as moderate and temperate as possible.

14. The pueblo established, the settlers and the religious who may be there will take pains to effect cordial relations with the natives, make friends of them and give them to understand the objectives of the settlement above defined.

15. If good comportment and persuasion win the friendship of the natives near the pueblo, who consent that the religious may teach and preach to them the law of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, see that it be done and procure that they be converted and attracted to the faith, and that they recognize us their King and Lord.

16. If the natives and their rulers do not wish to receive the religious preachers, after, as above stipulated, their purpose is pointed out, and if they have been requested many times to permit the religious to go among them and manifest to them the word of God, make a report of it, and send the report to our Council together with an account of all you may have done in the matter, to the end that we may order what further to do; and meantime, continue in

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friendly and cordial relations with the natives, and try every possible way to bring them to a knowledge of our religion.

17. If the officials named by us are not sufficient in number, you will choose for each island as many as may be wanting; in order to comply with the instructions and orders you have been given, administer our revenue and effect everything the other officials do in the other provinces of the Indies. Such appointments will be temporary and you will give us notice of them that we may provide as may be convenient. Persons who are to have places and offices are to be paid their salaries by our treasury from the fruits of the land, from our mines; they are to be nominated by the proper officials, their nominations certified by the Governor of the Province.

19. You will take with you four religious from among those that may now be in said islands; or, there not being so many, two religious who are resourceful and of high character, who are familiar with the doctrine and the administration of the sacrament.

20. You will see to it diligently that the Spaniards do the natives no injury or violence, that they do not wound them or hurt them in any way, or take their lands, but accord them the same good treatment they would accord their own people; and if any Spaniard offends them, you and your captains shall punish him rigorously, without delay; and not doing so, but neglecting to do so, we command you to do so with great rigor—as something we very much desire accomplished, contravention of which we shall take as a great disservice to us.

21. Arriving at that land, you will report to us an account of your voyage and the manner in which you disembarked and were received, of what you find there and learn about the country, and anything else of which you feel we ought to be apprised, with your opinion as to what should be provided, that we may better give order as to what may best conform to the service of God our Lord and yours; and so do afterward when you deem it advisable.

22. All which we charge upon you and order you to note and comply with inviolably, as otherwise we shall consider ourselves disserved. Dated in Madrid, August 28, 1569—The King—By order of His Majesty: Francisco de Loís.

In Europe we study Philip II in his character as a soldier, monarch of a great empire in impleachable conflict with another, rising under the sovereignty of Elizabeth and the inspiration of a faith Philip believed to be impeachable heresy. In the Philippines we study him as a Christian prince sending missions to the remotest isles of the world to enlighten the inhabitants, and at the same time carefully to protect them. So we see him here in a different light altogether than the sanguinary blaze that shone over Europe from the stake and the battlefields, the bivouacs of besieging armies, the fires of beleaguered cities. We get a better view of him, and it broadens and mellows our understanding. It resembles what the French say of learning another language; it almost gives us another soul.


—W. R.

Mendiola Bridge . . .

(Continued from page 6)

from the Jones and the Ayala bridges and the downtown streets than to widen streets or bridges in the congested sections of the city?

In this article only freight traffic is discussed. Every few minutes a heavy P. U. passenger truck rumbles menacingly along calle Zamora, through a maze of pedestrians, carromatas, cyclists and carabaos carts. Accidents are frequent. It is a credit to drivers that so few casualties have occurred. But it is because, realizing the danger, and speed being practically impossible, the drivers are more careful in the Pandacan district than elsewhere. The fact remains that about 50% of this passenger traffic would be permanently diverted by the opening of Mendiola street and construction of the Mendiola bridge across the Pasig river. The best way to relieve traffic jams on Manila's bridges and downtown streets is to build another bridge.



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