

- A Spaniard criticized his own countrymen in defense of the Filipino.

ON FILIPINO 'INDOLENCE'

The Philippine Progress, a monthly newsletter published by Development Bank of the Philippines, has a very interesting article entitled "Is the Filipino Indolent?" It quotes two old conflicting opinions on this topic — one by an Augustinian friar, Gaspar de San Agustin, the other by a Jesuit father named Juan Jose Delgado.

In an open letter dated 1772, Fray Gaspar wrote:

"The complexion of these Indians (Filipinos), as revealed by their outward features, is cold and moist, being much under the influence of the moon... This complexion and influence is what makes them inconstant, malicious, suspicious, sleepy, lazy, sluggish, given to frequenting rivers, seas and lakes, attached to fishing, ichthyophagous, that is to say, thriving on fish diet more than any other, poor spirited owing to their cold humor, and little inclined to work."

The Jesuit father, on the other hand, wrote:

"Who are the seamen who sail the ships and galleons to Acapulco and other ports, and sail them back again? The Spaniards, perhaps? Ask the navigators, the marine officers, the boat-swains, and they will tell you that this great and inestimable service is performed by Filipinos... Again, who are they that cultivate these lands and supply us with what we eat? Do the Spaniards, perchance, dig or reap, or plant any where in these islands? Of course not; for they no sooner land at Manila than they are all gentlemen... It is the Filipinos who plough the soil; who sow the rice; who weed the field; who watch over the growing grain; who reap it... It is the Filipinos who defend us from our enemies; for who are they who make up our garrisons, who man our fleets, who are ordered to advance first in every battle? Does

anyone believe for a moment that the Spaniards by themselves can keep this land if the Filipinos did not help them?"

It is interesting to note that the debate on Filipino fainéance has been going on as far back as 200 years. Then as now, the Filipinos had their detractors as well as defenders. There were Spaniards who thought very little of the

Filipinos. But there were also Spaniards who dared criticize their own countrymen on their attitude towards the natives of these islands. It is obvious that Fr. Delgado thought more of the Filipinos than his own countrymen. And that is saying a lot especially in that day and age. —(ALEJANDRO R. ROCES, in *The Manila Chronicle*)

KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS OWN SAKE

Cicero, in enumerating the various heads of mental excellence, lays down the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, as the first of them.

"This pertains most of all to human nature," he says, "for we are all of us drawn to the pursuit of knowledge; in which to excel we consider excellent, whereas to mistake, to err, to be ignorant, to be deceived, is both an evil and a disgrace."